

# TORTURE ROADS

**HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS  
SUFFERED BY CHILDREN  
ON THE MOVE IN TUNISIA**

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VOLUME 4  
NOVEMBER 2024 - APRIL 2025





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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>List of acronyms</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Scope and objectives of the research</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>14</b>
The presence and geographical distribution of people on the move in Tunisia	14
Thematic focus: the presence of children on the move in Tunisia	20
<b>A CONTINUUM OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHILDREN ON THE MOVE</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>GROWING UP IN THE SHADOWS: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS PREVENTING CHILDREN ON THE MOVE FROM LIVING IN DIGNITY AND REACHING ADULTHOOD IN SAFETY</b>	<b>26</b>
Violation of the right to legal identity	26
Violation of the right to health	27
Violation of the right to development and education	27

<b>URGENT NEED FOR GREATER PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN ON THE MOVE IN TUNISIA</b>	<b>28</b>
Inadequate child protection for children on the move at risk in Tunisia	28
Hindered access to durable solutions	29
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>TEMPORAL ANALYSIS</b>	<b>35</b>
Chronology of human rights violations	36
Chronology of operations at sea	46
Chronology of regional cooperation in the Mediterranean region	52
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>63</b>



# LIST OF ACRONYMS

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<b>AVRR</b>	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
<b>BID</b>	Best Interests Determination
<b>CAT</b>	Convention against Torture
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>CIDE</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CPE</b>	Child Protection Code
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CRT</b>	Tunisian Red Crescent
<b>DCIM</b>	Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration (Libya)
<b>DDH</b>	Human Rights Defender
<b>DGFE</b>	General Directorate of Borders and Foreigners of the Ministry of the Interior
<b>DGPE</b>	General Delegate for Child Protection
<b>DPE</b>	Child Protection Delegate
<b>DSR</b>	Refugee status determination
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>IMO</b>	International Maritime Organization
<b>INLCTP</b>	National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons
<b>INPT</b>	National Authority for the Prevention of Torture
<b>IOM</b>	United Nations International Organization for Migration

<b>ITS</b>	Informal Settlement
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>MRCC</b>	Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre
<b>MAS</b>	Ministry of Social Affairs
<b>ME</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MFES</b>	Ministry of Family, Women, Children and Seniors
<b>MI</b>	Ministry of the Interior
<b>MJ</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>MS</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OMCT</b>	World Organisation Against Torture
<b>SAR</b>	Search and Rescue
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>SSA</b>	Stability Support Apparatus (Libya)
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations Refugee Agency
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund



# METHODOLOGY



The OMCT's monitoring and research is based on:

- Open-source secondary data collection and in-depth analysis of reports and communications from local, national and international civil society organizations, governmental organizations and institutions, and research institutes.
- A series of semi-structured interviews with over 60 representatives of international, national and local non-governmental organizations (based in Tunis, Sfax, Zarzis, Medenine, Tozeur, Le Kef, Sousse), independent activists, researchers and experts working to defend the rights of people on the move in Tunisia, North Africa and Europe.
- Direct field observation with a mission to Sfax and in-depth documentation of 40 individual and collective cases of victims of violence and other types of human rights violations assisted by SANAD, the multidisciplinary direct assistance program for victims of torture, and by partner organizations.
- Analysis of the databases of four partner humanitarian organizations providing direct assistance to people on the move in Tunisia.
- A dozen semi-structured interviews with officials from international organizations, in order to uncover quantitative trends and validate conclusions drawn from fieldwork.
- A dozen interviews with the heads of public-sector institutions and health and child protection professionals.

Following in-depth study and meticulous verification of the typology, incidence and prevalence of human rights violations on Tunisian territory, the report presents conclusions relating to the qualitative aspect of these violations in terms of patterns and consequences on individuals, their families and their communities.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In line with previous reports, this report contains:

- A contextual, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the arrivals and departures, profile and geographical distribution of people on the move in Tunisia - with a focus on the profile of children on the move residing in Tunisia.
- The updated typology of human rights violations suffered by people on the move in Tunisia between November 2024 and April 2025, with qualitative and quantitative data on them, the profile of the victims and the modus operandi - providing an overview of their disproportionate impact on children on the move.
- The legislative framework of international and national law, recalling Tunisia's obligations to protect all children present on its territory, in compliance with applicable treaties and conventions.
- A chronology of human rights violations, a chronology of developments linked to migration and asylum in the Mediterranean region, and a chronology of operations at sea.

A series of Focus Briefs, to be published between September and December 2025, will analyze in depth the respect for the rights of children on the move in Tunisia, as well as the capacities and responses of state and non-state actors to ensure their effective protection and full realization.

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1. The first *Focus Brief* (September 2025) analyzes the violations suffered by people on the move between November 2024 and April 2025. A specific *Focus Brief* will be devoted to the criminalization of children on the move and will offer an overview of immigration-related detention in Tunisia. Subsequent *Focus Briefs* will examine children's rights to legal identity and nationality, health, development, education, and the right to safe passage to adulthood. A specific *Focus Brief* will also be devoted to assessing the existing child protection system in Tunisia and its capacity to respond to the specific needs of children on the move.



# INTRODUCTION



Between November 2024 and April 2025, arrivals in Italy from Tunisia continued to decline, recording a total drop of 78% compared to the period May - October 2024.<sup>2</sup> Far from discouraging the movement, migration management focused on security and geopolitical interests is leading to the death and disappearance of hundreds of people on Tunisia's borders, and a reorientation of migration routes towards other transit countries before entering the European space - such as Libya, Morocco or others. People on the move, including children, are then exposed to additional risks before and during attempts to cross land and sea borders irregularly.

In Tunisia, while the European Union and its Member States are strengthening their strategic partnership on border management with the Tunisian authorities, people on the move continue to be criminalized and suffer violations of their rights, and are denied access to sustainable and dignified solutions, in contradiction with the international human rights obligations of Tunisia and its partners. Particularly vulnerable, children on the move suffer the disproportionate consequences of these violations in the short, medium and long term, impacting on their development and their transition to adulthood. The OMCT has chosen to dedicate this report to them, highlighting:

- **The direct responsibility of the Tunisian State**, through the violence exercised by the security forces and the hate speech and xenophobia disseminated by the executive power. The analysis details how children on the move - particularly unaccompanied or separated children - are criminalized because of their lack of legal status, and continue to be arrested and detained, in violation of their fundamental rights. All the experts and organizations consulted for this study confirmed that forced displacement and deportation also affect children, whatever their age, legal status, profile or nationality, and are accompanied by physical and psychological violence that can amount to torture, with devastating effects on children's stability and well-being.
- **The indirect responsibility of the State**, linked to its failure to protect people at risk and prevent human rights violations on its territory. Children on the move do not benefit from a protection system capable of effectively preventing and identifying risks and vulnerabilities, legally qualifying them and offering comprehensive, secure and sustainable solutions. The experts and officials consulted confirm that the existing systems remain largely inaccessible to migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children.

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2. The May-October period is generally more favorable for departures by sea from Tunisia to Italy. However, this drop cannot be explained by this reason, since over the period November 2023 - April 2024, 28,585 people arrived in Italy from Tunisia, i.e. ten times more people than over the same period a year later. See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/105834>, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/105320>

- **The responsibility of non-State actors**, whether organized criminal groups exploiting children and families - forcing them into begging, exclusion and marginalization - or ordinary citizens perpetrating racist and xenophobic acts of violence, manifesting themselves in physical and psychological aggression. Through a series of case studies, the report illustrates the exposure of these children to violence, child labor, human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence.

Finally, **shrinking space for civic society**, already highlighted in the previous report, persists. This translates into limited or non-existent operational space for actors working to protect the human rights of people on the move, and leads to an increase in needs in a context of denial of access to rights.

### Children on the move in Tunisia

Given the absence of publicly available official data, the restrictions imposed on civil society actors, and the suspension of asylum registration and refugee status determination since June 2024, it is particularly difficult to estimate the number of people on the move residing in or transiting through Tunisia, including the number of children on the move. Most families live in the shadows, away from the national authorities; births are rarely registered and irregular entries by land are not counted. According to the OMCT's data collection:

- On April 30, 2025, **1,888** children were under international protection in Tunisia - the majority of Syrian (44%), Sudanese (22.6%) and Somali (5.9%) nationality. Of these, **144** were refugees, including 21 unaccompanied children, and **1,744** were asylum seekers. Of the children seeking asylum, 30% were unaccompanied.
- Of a total of **1,234** people who applied for international protection between June 2024 and May 2025 but were unable to register, **172** were children, **131** of them unaccompanied (90% of them from Sudan).
- Between November 2024 and April 2025, IOM registered **12,524** people on the move, including **1,900** children (15% of the total). Nearly **470** were unaccompanied.

# RESEARCH SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this report is to shed light on the scale and nature of alleged human rights violations against people on the move<sup>3</sup> and more specifically against children on the move committed between November 2024 and April 2025 as well as their disproportionate effects and long-term consequences on this group of individuals, their families and their communities.

As in previous reports,<sup>4</sup> particular emphasis is placed on violations falling within the OMCT's mandate, in particular institutional violence, torture, excessive use of force and ill-treatment perpetrated by security forces, denial of access to justice and procedural guarantees, forced displacement, arbitrary detention and any other form of deprivation of liberty.<sup>5</sup>

The study examines the responsibility of Tunisian state authorities and focuses on violations committed on Tunisian territory, including border areas under the effective control of the Tunisian state.<sup>6</sup> In line with the OMCT's mandate, the study investigates the direct responsibility - the actions of the Tunisian authorities (mainly committed by security forces) - and indirect responsibility of the Tunisian state, also referring to the omission or tolerance of state authorities towards violence committed by non-state actors (traffickers, criminal gangs or smugglers) and/or individuals (Tunisian civilians) against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>7</sup>

3. In line with OMCT's «Routes of Torture» report published in 2021, this report alternatively uses the term «people on the move / mixed migration / movement flows», «migrants, refugees and asylum seekers» as a global category including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, unaccompanied and separated children, victims of trafficking, migrant workers and migrants (including those in an irregular situation). The term describes the cross-border movements of people whose protection profiles, reasons for moving and needs vary widely. Motivated by a multiplicity of factors, people involved in mixed flows have different legal statuses and present different vulnerabilities. While refugees and migrants belong to distinct legal categories, they are increasingly taking similar routes and means of transport by land and/or sea. At every stage of their journey, they face extreme human rights risks and violations, including torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment («ill-treatment»), unlawful killings, sexual and gender-based violence, abduction, extortion, forced labor and human trafficking.

4. Previous reports covered violations committed between February and June 2023, «Mapping responses to human rights violations: the cases of people in mixed migratory movements in Tunisia, OMCT Tunisia» (June 2023), and between July and October 2023, «**Torture routes vol n°1: Cartographie des violations subies par les personnes en déplacement en Tunisie**» (December 2023), «**Les routes de la torture vol n°2: Cartographie des violations subies par les personnes en déplacement en Tunisie entre novembre 2023 et avril 2024**» (September 2024), «**Les routes de la torture vol n°3: le rétrécissement de l'espace civique et son impact sur les personnes en déplacement**» (January 2025).

5. The United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment defines torture as: «any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, to intimidate or coerce him or her or a third person, or for any other reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. This term does not extend to pain or suffering resulting solely from, inherent in or occasioned by legitimate sanctions.» Article 1 of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

6. Alleged violations committed by the Algerian, Libyan and Italian authorities have also been reported, but the report does not analyze them.

7. By becoming parties to international treaties, states assume obligations and duties to respect, protect and fulfill human rights under international law. The obligation to respect means that states must refrain from hindering or restricting the enjoyment of rights and freedoms. The obligation to protect requires states to protect individuals and groups against human rights violations. The obligation to fulfill means that states must take positive measures to facilitate the enjoyment of fundamental human rights.

## **The conceptual framework: Torture Roads**

OMCT research confirms that torture and other forms of ill-treatment are widespread at every stage of migration, in countries of origin (often a trigger for migration), along the migration route, and in destination countries, at the hands of state actors, or by being exposed to violence from non-state actors. Torture and other forms of ill-treatment can look manifold, including kicking, punching, caning, humiliation, racial insults, threats, sexual violence, poor conditions of detention including overcrowding, and lack of (or delayed access to) medical care, food, drinking water and sanitation facilities. Other recognized forms of torture and ill-treatment include incommunicado detention and/or prolonged solitary confinement; as well as expulsion, return or extradition to another state where there is a risk of torture or ill-treatment. Rape and other forms of sexual violence have also been recognized as equivalent to torture. Threats or actual forced witnessing of the torture of others are psychological torture. These types of violations undermine the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of people on the move.

The OMCT believes that the analysis of the human rights situation of people on the move residing in and/or transiting Tunisia is essential to support Tunisian authorities in their efforts to comply with obligations under international human rights law, and to promote the adoption and implementation of policies based on equity, justice and human rights for all.

A better understanding of the needs, profiles, vulnerabilities, intentions and expectations of individual migrants, families and communities, and of those among them eligible for international protection, is important for designing an asylum and migration model specific to Tunisia.

The OMCT reports also aim to:

- Inform the development of migration policies of Tunisia's partners in Europe and Africa, by advocating for the inclusion of human rights protection in current and future bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements.
- Participate in lobbying Tunisian authorities and partners to halt ongoing violations and investigate serious violations committed in the past.
- Raise awareness in Tunisian society of the need to respect human rights of all, including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, by promoting a discourse of inclusiveness and equity.



# CONTEXT

## THE PRESENCE AND GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IN TUNISIA

This chapter looks at the geographical presence, arrivals, departures and movements of people on the move in Tunisia, including children, and aims to show that despite security-oriented border management policies, Tunisia continues to be an important transit country on the central Mediterranean route.

### Arrivals

Inflows of people on the move by land remain significant, with **an estimated 2,000 arrivals per month since June 2024**,<sup>8</sup> the vast majority of them irregular, either at official border crossing points, or crossing the borders with Libya and Algeria in desert and/or mountainous areas. Between November and February 2025, **an estimated 9,600 persons arrived by land from Algeria**<sup>9</sup> and **1,400 from Libya**.<sup>10</sup>

Between November 2024 and April 2025, at least 292 persons, who had left from the Libyan shores, were rescued at sea and landed in Tunisia, according to a humanitarian organization.<sup>11</sup>

### Departures

#### • Regular departures

**Requests for assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR)** to the IOM remain at a very high level over the period November 2024 to April 2025 - with 500 to 700 people waiting each month to return to their countries of origin. Between November 2024 and April 2025, IOM facilitated **voluntary return to countries of origin of over 3,470 persons** in vulnerable situations.<sup>12</sup> Guinea (28.3%), Gambia (12.5%) and Côte d'Ivoire (10.2%) are the most represented nationalities.

Furthermore, throughout 2025, people on the move also returned to their home countries on a regular basis with the support of their embassies and consular representations.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, in 2025, **the resettlement quota available in a third country for refugees** in Tunisia has fallen by 20% compared with 2024, but remains marginal (225 places in 2024, and 180 in 2025).<sup>14</sup> From November 2024 to April 2025, **68 persons under international protection left Tunisia** via third-country resettlement programs.

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8. Humanitarian source.

9. Humanitarian source. According to another recent study, 85% of people on the move entering Tunisia enter by land, via the Algerian border (60%) or the Libyan border (25%). 14% enter by air, due to the absence of visas for several sub-Saharan countries. See **70% of sub-Saharan migrants defiant towards international organizations**

10. Humanitarian source.

11. Humanitarian source. It is certain that this figure is underestimated, given that humanitarian actors no longer receive systematic notification from the authorities and are not always warned in the event of disembarkation after a SAR operation.

12. Humanitarian source. There is a minor drop (4.51%) in voluntary returns compared with the previous period (May 2024 - October 2024).

13. IOM does not carry out voluntary returns through AVRR of people under international protection. OMCT has no figures on this trend. See the box on spontaneous returns in the chapter «Denial of access to durable and dignified solutions».

14. Humanitarian source.

## Lack of civil and legal documentation, an obstacle to departure

Chapter III of law 75-40<sup>15</sup> governs the issue of travel documents for persons who do not have a Tunisian passport, in particular refugees and stateless persons. Unlike the law<sup>16</sup> and the decree<sup>17</sup> regulating the entry and stay of foreigners in Tunisia, the provisions contained in this chapter refer to refugees and stateless persons and recognize the State's obligations to issue them travel documents:

- **Type B:** This document is issued free of charge to foreigners who do not have refugee status. It is valid for one month and is non-renewable.
- **Type C:** This document is intended for refugees under the 1951 Convention.<sup>18</sup> It is valid for two years and renewable if refugee status is maintained.
- **Type D:** This document is intended for stateless persons under the 1954 Convention.<sup>19</sup> It is valid for up to two years and renewable if the statelessness persists.

Renewal of type C and D documents is subject to approval by the competent administrative authority, which may refuse if the person represents a threat to public security.<sup>20</sup> Articles 34 and 35 provide for penalties for non-compliance with the law.<sup>21</sup> In the event of a repeat offence, penalties may be doubled.

### • *Irregular departures to Italy*

Out of a total of 82,900 arrivals by sea in Europe between November 2024 and April 2025<sup>22</sup> (down 20% in comparison to the previous period),<sup>23</sup> **25,860 persons** arrived by sea in Italy.

Between November 2024 and April 2025, a total of 22,968 people are thought to have left Libya<sup>25</sup> (88.5% of arrivals by sea in Italy - down 8% in comparison to the period of May 2024 - October 2024), compared with **2,821 persons departing from Tunisia**<sup>26</sup> (10.9% of arrivals by sea in Italy - down 78% in comparison to the period of May 2024 - October 2024).<sup>27</sup> The OMCT estimates the number of disembarkations following interceptions at sea of people attempting to reach Italy by the Tunisian authorities at 4,449 in 2025, a figure certainly underestimated in the absence of official data.<sup>28</sup>

15. See art. 20 to 27 of **Law No. 1975-40 on passports and travel documents**, May 20, 1975.

16. **Law No. 68-7 of March 8, 1968, on the status of foreigners in Tunisia.**

17. **Decree No. 68-198 of June 22, 1968, regulating the entry and residence of foreigners in Tunisia.**

18. Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, July 28, 1951. This Convention was ratified by Tunisia on October 24, 1957.

19. Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, September 28, 1954. This Convention was ratified by Tunisia on July 29, 1969.

20. Art. 26 of **Law No. 1975-40 on passports and travel documents**, May 20, 1975.

21. Under article 35 of **Law No. 1975-40 relating to passports and travel documents**, May 20, 1975, «any Tunisian who knowingly leaves or enters Tunisian territory without an official travel document will be punished by 15 days' to 6 months' imprisonment and a fine of 30 to 120 dinars, or by one of these two penalties only».

22. See **UNHCR, Europe situations: data trends, April 2025**; **UNHCR, Europe situations: data trends, December 2024** and **UNHCR, Europe situations: data trends, October 2024**.

23. See **Europe Situations: data and trends - arrivals and displaced populations, April 2024**.

and **UNHCR, Europe Situations: data and trends - arrivals and displaced populations, October 2024**.

24. Over the previous period (May 2024 - October 2024), 104,900 people had arrived by sea in Europe, including 25,944 on the Italian coast. See **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard April 2024** and **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard October 2024**.

25. See **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard November 2024**, **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard December 2024** and **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard April 2025**.

26. See **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard April 2024** and **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard October 2024**.

The May-October period is generally more favorable for departures by sea from Tunisia to Italy. However, this drop cannot be explained by this reason, since over the period November 2023 - April 2024, 28,585 people had arrived in Italy from Tunisia, ten times more people than over the same period a year later. See **Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard April 2024**, **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard December 2023** and **UNHCR, Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard October 2023**.

27. The May-October period is generally more favorable for sea departures from Tunisia to Italy. However, this drop cannot be explained by this reason, since in the period November 2023 - April 2024, 28,585 people arrived in Italy from Tunisia, ten times more than in the same period a year later. See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/105834>, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/105320>

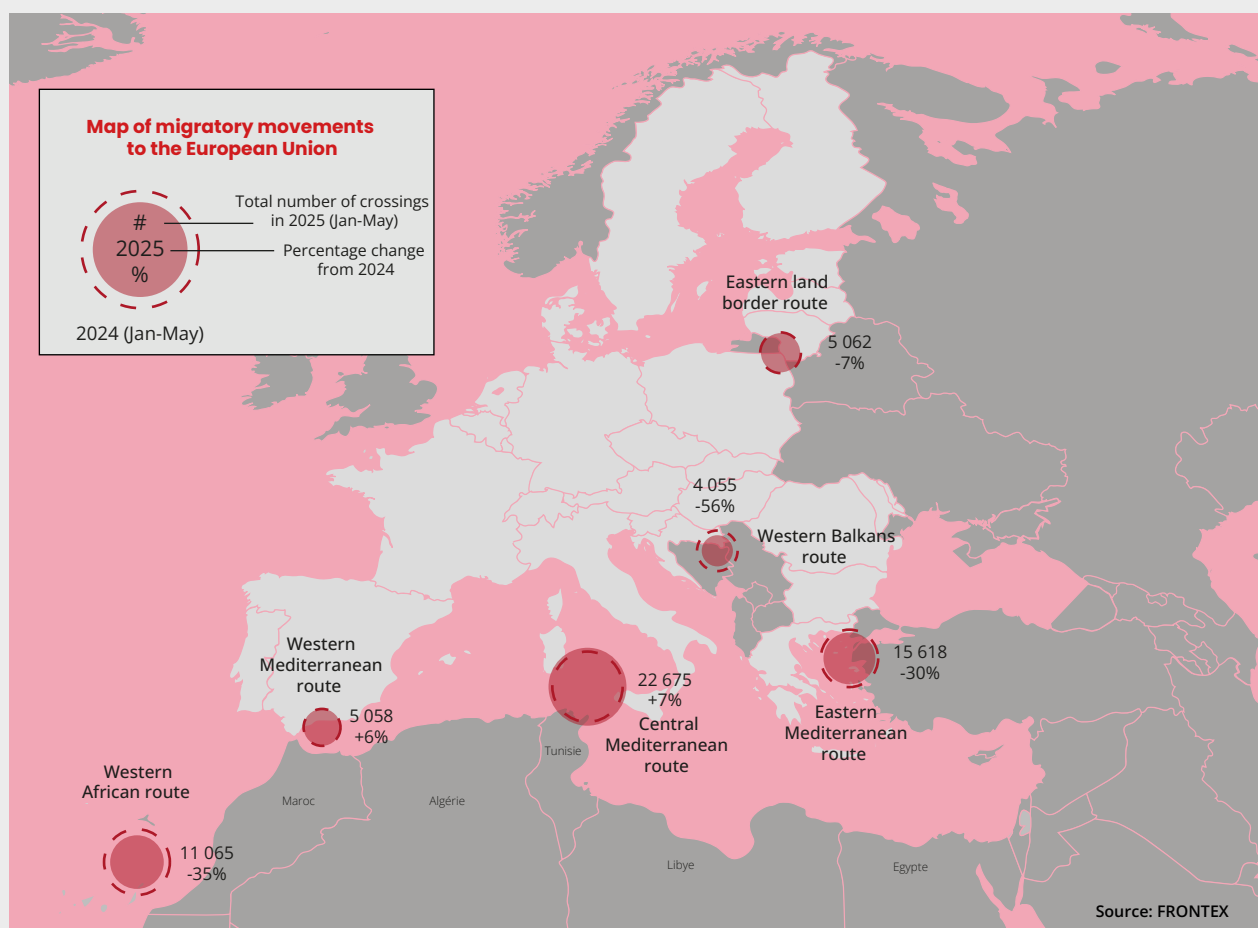
28. Humanitarian source. OMCT refers to landings, not individuals, given that people usually attempt to cross the Mediterranean several times over the course of a few months.

From January to June 2025, Bangladesh (32.9%), Eritrea (14.6%) and Egypt (11.7%) are the three most frequent nationalities of new arrivals in Italy.<sup>29</sup> In the case of people departing from the Tunisian coast and arriving in Italy in 2025, the main nationalities are mostly Tunisian, with a minority from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Mali.<sup>30</sup>

- *Irregular departures to neighboring third countries*

According to OMCT's data collection, between November 2024 and April 2024, an increasing number of people on the move would decide to leave Tunisia «spontaneously» for Libya, Algeria and Morocco, in search of better opportunities to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. These departures are said to take place irregularly overland, often via migrant smuggling networks. According to international organizations with beneficiaries in Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Morocco, these «spontaneous» departures also involve people on the move under international protection as well as children.<sup>31</sup>

## Map of migratory movements to Europe between January and May 2025<sup>32</sup>



29. **Frontex, Migratory Map: monitoring and risk analysis.** Tunisia has very few Eritreans, if any Bangladeshi and Egyptian migrants on its soil. These figures include arrivals from Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey and all other countries of departure by sea to Italy.

30. See **UNHCR Sea Arrivals Dashboard April 2025**

31. According to one humanitarian organization, 500 people on the move under international protection left Tunisia «spontaneously» for Morocco and Libya.

32. Data from the European agency FRONTEX concerning irregular sea arrivals between January and May 2025 differ somewhat from data from UNHCR, the Italian Ministry of the Interior and the Spanish Ministry of the Interior. See EU external borders: Irregular crossings drop by 20% in first 5 months of 2025», June 2025.

- **Deportations and illegal returns to Libya and Algeria**

Since the end of September 2023, Tunisian security forces have been deporting people on the move to Libya and Algeria on a regular basis, particularly those intercepted at sea (see chapter on violations).

Despite the difficulties of documentation given the cross-border nature of deportations and illegal returns (*push-back*), the modus operandi and the destinations (from desert border areas - to detention centers in Libya), it is estimated that over **12,000 persons were deported** by the Tunisian authorities between January 2025 and April 2025.<sup>33</sup> The majority, over 8,000 persons, were deported to Algeria,<sup>34</sup> putting them at risk of deportation to Libya<sup>35</sup> or Niger.<sup>36</sup> According to testimonies collected from victims and interviews with humanitarian and human rights organizations in Tunisia and Libya, these deportations concern thousands of people on the move, in violation of Tunisia's obligations under international law.<sup>37</sup>

Between June 2023 and the end of April 2025, a total of 12,885 entries of people on the move at the Tunisian border were counted by the Libyan authorities (either after deportation, or during an attempt to cross the Libyan borders irregularly to enter Tunisia) - 833 of them between November 2024 and April 2025.<sup>38</sup>

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33. Humanitarian source. This figure is largely underestimated. Moreover, in its previous research, OMCT estimated that over 16,600 people would have been deported by the Tunisian authorities in 2024.

34. Humanitarian source.

35. Since January 2024, a total of 2,015 interceptions of people on the border with Algeria at Ghadamès have been recorded by Libyan authorities (either after deportation, or during an attempt to cross the Libyan border illegally into Algeria) - 1,506 of them between November 2024 and April 2025. The OMCT refers to interceptions, not individuals, bearing in mind that people can attempt to cross the border and be arrested several times over the course of a few months. Humanitarian source. Furthermore, between early 2024 and February 2025, at least 1,800 people were expelled from Algeria to Ghadamès in Libya after being arrested by Algerian security forces near the Tunisian border. See: FTDES, «Suppression of Movement Migration Control, Manufactured Precarity and Racialised Border Regimes in Post-Hirak Algeria», June 2025, p. 80.

36. At least 31,404 people were expelled from Algeria at the Niger border during 2024 via the Assamanka desert zone (26,031 people in 2023). Between January 2025 and April 2025, more than 7,000 people were expelled from Algeria to Niger. See <https://alarmephonesahara.info/fr/news/assamaka-niger-deportations-from-algeria-to-the-desert-between-1-january-and-june-2025-thousands-of-people-deported-several-killed-by-harsh-conditions>. In April 2025, more than 4,975 people were expelled from Algeria to Assamaka in Niger; the expulsions were preceded by large-scale arrest campaigns in many Algerian towns since the beginning of April. See: FTDES, «Suppression of Movement Migration Control, Manufactured Precarity and Racialised Border Regimes in Post-Hirak Algeria», June 2025, p. 31.

37. One humanitarian organization reports an average of 1,500 people deported every week. Under Article 3 of the Convention against Torture, ratified by Tunisia on September 23, 1988, the absolute prohibition on refoulement is stronger than that laid down in refugee law, meaning that persons cannot be returned even if they do not qualify for refugee or asylum status under the 1951 Refugee Convention or national law. Consequently, non-refoulement under the Convention against Torture must be assessed independently of the determination of refugee or asylum status. See AL TUN 6/2024.

38. Humanitarian source. The OMCT refers to interceptions and not individuals, bearing in mind that people may attempt to cross the border and be arrested several times over the course of a few months.

## Presence

### Profile, presence and geographical distribution

The number of people on the move (migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people and others eligible for international protection) residing in or transiting through Tunisia is difficult to estimate.

#### • *Persons under international protection*

On April 30, 2025, 10,724 persons were under international protection in Tunisia, including 2,592 refugees (24%) and 8,132 asylum seekers (76%). 74.5% of refugees and asylum seekers registered in Tunisia come from countries covered by the UNHCR's no-return policy.<sup>39</sup> Sudanese nationals still make up the largest group (47% of the total, 97% of them asylum seekers), followed by Syria (19%),<sup>40</sup> Somalia (9%), Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Nigeria, Eritrea.<sup>41</sup> The vast majority are men (81%).

Since the suspension of asylum registration and refugee status determination in June 2024, the number of people under international protection in Tunisia has fallen by 40%. The number of refugees and asylum seekers between November and April 2025 fell by 31.16%.

Of a total of 1,234 persons who applied for international protection between June 2024 and May 2025 but were unable to register,<sup>42</sup> 874 were from countries covered by the UNHCR's no-return policy, and therefore with a strong presumption of access to refugee status - including 640 citizens of Sudan, 97 from Syria and 79 from Somalia.<sup>43</sup>

In April 2025, 51.4% of people under international protection resided in the Médenine governorate, 30.1% in Greater Tunis (Tunis and Ariana governorates), and 5.6% in Sfax. Compared with November 2024,<sup>44</sup> there has been a slight decrease in the number of people under international protection residing in Sfax.

At the end of April 2025, UNHCR was accommodating 790 persons in its various shelters in Tunis, Médenine and Zarzis:<sup>45</sup>

- Bhar Lazreg: 36 persons
- Ibn Khaldoun 1: 129 persons
- Ibn Khaldoun 2: 35 persons
- Raoued 1: 108 persons
- Raoued 2: 39 persons
- Women's shelter: 67 persons
- Al-Jdairia Center: 376 persons

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39. Notably Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Syria. See UNHCR, Tunisia monthly operational update, April 2025.

40. Syrian citizens are registered as asylum seekers but are considered refugees in accordance with the practice established with the government since the start of the Syrian crisis. The few Syrians who possess a refugee card (and have therefore followed the refugee status determination procedure) are cases considered for resettlement or the granting of a residence permit.

41. Humanitarian source.

42. Many people are deprived of protection and assistance due to the government-imposed suspension of registration of new asylum seekers.

43. Humanitarian source.

44. In October 2024, 50.2% of people under international protection resided in the Médenine governorate, 29.5% in Greater Tunis (Tunis and Ariana governorates) and 8.7% in Sfax.

45. On April 30, 2025, the following shelters accommodated people under international protection and had the following capacities: Bhar Lazreg (50), Ibn Khaldoun 1 (205), Ibn Khaldoun 2 (82), Raoued 1 (150), Raoued 2 (50), women's shelter (90), Al-Jdairia center (600).

## • *Migrants*<sup>46</sup>

The majority of people on the move residing in or transiting through Tunisia are irregular migrants without international protection. It is difficult to estimate their numbers and geographical distribution. By January 2025, according to the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior,<sup>47</sup> more than 20,000 persons had been counted in informal settlements in El Amra, in the governorate of Sfax.<sup>48</sup>

Between November 2024 and April 2025, the IOM recorded 12,524 people on the move. The most represented nationalities were Guinea (40%), Côte d'Ivoire (11%), Sierra Leone (7.9%) and Cameroon (7%). The majority were men (65%). These data are not representative of the number of people on the move in Tunisia, the majority of whom do not register with IOM.

In June 2025, the IOM was hosting almost 1,300 people in its various shelters.

## Deaths and disappearances

According to OMCT's data collection, at least 1,818 people were reported dead or missing off the Tunisian coast in 2024. Between January and April 2025, 63 persons were reported dead and 40 missing during operations at sea off the Tunisian coast, including 4 children.

Similarly, the OMCT has documented several cases of deaths linked to living conditions (infectious and respiratory diseases, malnutrition, dehydration) and the risks to which people on the move are exposed (deaths during deportations and land or sea interceptions, suspicious deaths during inter- and intra-community tensions), without being able to estimate a precise number of deaths.

Forced displacements to desert border areas and deportations to Algeria and Libya, carried out continuously since June 2023, coupled with the denial of access to documentation and protection following the suspension of UNHCR registration procedures, have resulted in a lack of visibility on the number of disappearances and severance of family ties, preventing a count of potential deaths of missing persons.

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46. The OMCT uses this term here for reasons of clarity in assessing the presence of people on the move in Tunisia - distinguishing between people under international protection and people on the move in an irregular situation without international protection. However, while refugees and migrants belong to distinct legal categories, they are increasingly taking similar routes and means of transport by land and/or sea. At every stage of their journey, they face extreme human rights risks and violations, including torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment («ill-treatment»), unlawful killings, sexual and gender-based violence, kidnapping, extortion, forced labor and human trafficking. This distinction is all the more questionable given that the registration of new asylum applications in Tunisia has been suspended under pressure from the authorities since May 2024.

47. <https://www.businessnews.com.tn/tunisie--plus-de-vingt-mille-migrants-irreguliers-a-el-amra,520,144564,3>

48. These figures come from an official source, but the OMCT cannot guarantee their validity, as the methods used for this census have not been publicly detailed.

49. Humanitarian source. These estimates are certainly lower than real figures, as a certain number of shipwrecks and disappearances at sea are not recorded. Tunisia has not provided any official data on this subject. According to the IOM, the number of missing or dead people on the move on the Central Mediterranean route (departures from Libya, Tunisia and Algeria) rose from 1,553 in 2021 to 1,417 in 2022, reaching 2,526 in 2023 and 1,810 in 2024. The IOM counts 367 deaths or disappearances between November 2024 and April 2025 on the Central Mediterranean route. See IOM, *Missing Migrants Project*. UNHCR counts 1,862 deaths and disappearances at sea on the central Mediterranean route in 2024. See *UNHCR, Dead and Missing at Sea - Mediterranean and Northwest African maritime routes, July 2025*.

50. Humanitarian source.

51. According to one humanitarian organization, at least 10 people on the move have died as a result of tuberculosis. In the absence of official data, the OMCT cannot provide an estimate of the precise number of people on the move who died, including children on the move, over the period studied for the purpose of this report.

## THEMATIC FOCUS:

# THE PRESENCE OF CHILDREN ON THE MOVE IN TUNISIA

According to the latest government census, there are 3,634,533 children in Tunisia.<sup>52</sup> The total number of children on the move present on Tunisian soil is impossible to estimate for the following reasons:

- There is no publicly available official data on the number of people on the move residing or transiting Tunisian territory.
- There is no publicly available official data on the number of irregular entries by land.
- The registration of children potentially eligible for asylum seeker and refugee status has been suspended since June 2024.
- Not all child migrants register with the IOM.
- Difficulties are encountered in registering births in Tunisia, in the country of origin and during the migration process.
- Difficulties are encountered in registering deaths of people on the move.

On April 30, 2025, **1,888 children were registered as refugees or asylum seekers** with the UNHCR (18% of the total number of people registered).<sup>53</sup> The majority were Syrian (44%), Sudanese (22.6%) and Somali (5.9%). 144 of them were refugees, including 21 unaccompanied minors, and 1,744 were asylum seekers, or 92% of the total number of children registered by the UNHCR. Of the children seeking asylum, 30% were unaccompanied and less than 1% were separated.

Of a total of 1,234 persons who applied for international protection between June 2024 and May 2025, **172 children were unable to register**<sup>54</sup> of whom 131 were unaccompanied minors (with 90% from Sudan).<sup>55</sup>

Among new registrations at the IOM between November 2024 and April 2025, there were **1,900 children** (15% of the total), of whom almost 470 were unaccompanied minors, while 69% were under 24 years old.

In June 2025, of the 1,300 people housed by the IOM in its various shelters, 103 were children. On April 30, 2025, 271 children were hosted by UNHCR, including 232 unaccompanied children. Of these, 11 resided in the Al-Jadaria center, the others in the agency's other shelters. According to OMCT's data collection, around 400 other unaccompanied minors under international protection were homeless at the end of April 2025.

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52. Institut National de la Statistique, Recensement général de la population et de l'habitat 2024 : Bilan démographique, May 2025.

53. UNHCR. 4114 of these are under the age of 24 (38%).

54. Many people are deprived of all protection and assistance due to the government-imposed suspension of registration of new asylum seekers.

55. Humanitarian source.

- **Regular and irregular departures**

Among those who received voluntary return and reintegration assistance from IOM and left Tunisia between November 2024 and April 2025, were 287 children and 1,272 young people (aged 18-24). By 2024, 29 refugee children had been resettled in a third country.<sup>56</sup> In addition, some 1,400 children seeking asylum in Tunisia can no longer be reached and are probably no longer in Tunisia. While a small number of them are currently in Libya and Morocco, hundreds of children previously registered as asylum seekers remain unaccounted for.

### **What does international law say?**

A **child** is every human being below the age of 18 years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.<sup>57</sup>

**Children on the move** represent a highly diverse population. They live in varying circumstances that determine the risks, deprivations, needs and opportunities available to them. Regardless of their origin and the reasons for their move, children in migration situations remain above all children, entitled to the same rights as all other children, rights that cannot be interrupted at borders.<sup>58</sup>

They can fall into various sub-categories:<sup>59</sup>

- International migrant children (regular or irregular)
- Children in need of international protection (refugee children, asylum-seeking children, refugee-like situations, etc.).
- Internally displaced children (within state borders due to conflict, violence, disasters, etc.)
- Children indirectly affected by migration and displacement (children left behind, second-generation immigrant children, refugee children, IDP-related children)
- Children returning home voluntarily
- Temporarily mobile children
- Internal migrant children

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56. With the exception of the USA (prior to the 2025 suspension), other resettlement countries generally do not accept unaccompanied refugee children for resettlement.

57. Art. 1 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

58. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants, «Children are Children First: Protecting Children's Rights in the Context of Migration», July 22, 2024, §2. See also: <https://www.unicef.org/child-protection/migrant-displaced-children>

59. International Data Alliance for Children on the Move, Children on the move: key terms, definitions and concepts, 2023.

It is important to note that children can fall into several categories and move from one group to another. Children in highly vulnerable or at-risk situations (all groups) are generally classified in the following sub-categories:

- **Unaccompanied children:** An unaccompanied minor is a child under the age of 18 who has been separated from both parents and any other family member, and who is not in the care of any adult with legal or customary responsibility for his or her care. The child is therefore totally deprived of parental or family protection and has no legal or customary guardian to look after him or her.<sup>60</sup>
- **Separated children:** A separated minor is a child who has been separated from both parents or their primary care takers by law or custom, but who is not necessarily separated from other family members. A separated minor may therefore be accompanied by another adult, without this adult having the legal or customary responsibility of guardian.<sup>61</sup>
- **Stateless children:** A stateless child is a child to whom no state recognizes nationality under its legislation.<sup>62</sup>
- **Child victims of trafficking or smuggling**<sup>63</sup>

In the context of international migration, children can find themselves in a situation of double or multiple vulnerability, both as children and as children affected by migration who (a) are themselves people on the move, alone or with their families, (b) are born to parents who are people on the move in destination or transit countries and may not have access to documents and/or nationality and/or legal status, or (c) remain in their country of origin or in a third country, while one or both parents have migrated to another country.<sup>64</sup>

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60. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children UK (SCUK), UNICEF, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and World Vision International, Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, Inter-Agency Working Group, January 2004, p. 13.

61. Idem.

62. Art. 1 of the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, September 28, 1954. Tunisia acceded to this Convention on July 29, 1969.

63. For definition, see section in OMCT Focus brief violations.

64. Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability, United Nations Network on Migration, 2021.

# A CONTINUUM OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

The OMCT's in-depth research confirms that between November 2024 and April 2025, the following violations continue with the same intensity and prevalence as those reported in previous research - with a disproportionate effect on children on the move:

**Criminalization of children on the move:** The OMCT and its partners have documented an increase in children on the move being subjected to arbitrary detention, secret detention and/or incommunicado detention. Children are arrested and detained on the basis of their legal status - regardless of their profile - in an arbitrary manner (25% of children on the move reported having been subjected to arbitrary detention, without respect for the procedural guarantees established by Tunisian law) and in deplorable conditions (overcrowding, variable access to care, violence). 19% of prison inmates under the age of 20 are foreigners, with many children on the move in adult prisons. 10% of inmates in re-education centers for minors are children on the move.<sup>65</sup>

**Forced and arbitrary internal displacement and deportation:** Forced and arbitrary displacement to border areas, and deportation to Libya or Algeria, remain the main risk for people on the move (at least 12,000 between January and April 2025, the majority to Algeria), regardless of profile or legal status.<sup>66</sup> Deportation is the violation most reported by children (67%).<sup>67</sup> These practices may constitute acts of torture and ill-treatment under international law and give rise to related violations.

**Family separation and enforced disappearances:** A frequent consequence of security force operations, family separations generate psychological distress in separated children, who are all the more exposed to abuse and denied access to services in the absence of their legal guardians. The OMCT and its partners have documented certain situations leading to family separations that constitute enforced disappearances.

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65. Humanitarian source.

66. Humanitarian source. This figure is largely underestimated. Moreover, in its previous research, the OMCT estimated that over 16,600 people would have been deported by the Tunisian authorities in 2024.

67. Humanitarian source.

Recurrent violence against children on the move in Tunisia perpetrated by various actors include:

- **Violence, excessive use of force, torture and ill-treatment by State agents:** Children on the move are regularly subjected to physical violence during identity checks, arrests or internal displacement or deportation. In some cases, these practices may constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, in violation of international law.
- **Physical and psychological violence by non-State actors:** Children are increasingly exposed to intra-community violence in informal settlements, as well as xenophobic and racist violence in the public space by Tunisian citizens.
- **Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV):** Sexual violence is widespread throughout the migration process, affecting both children and adults. The OMCT's research reveals an increase in this type of violence. In Tunisia, 28% of people on the move who were victims of violence - children and adults alike - said they had experienced sexual violence during their journey.<sup>68</sup>

**Dehumanizing border-crossing practices.** In the absence of regular migration routes, children risk their lives by taking irregular routes to and from Tunisia, either alone, with their families, or relying on smugglers and unrelated adults. At least **1,818 people are thought to have died or gone missing** off the Tunisian coast in 2024.<sup>69</sup> The Tunisian coastguard continues to carry out violent and dangerous interceptions in violation of international law, resulting in fatal shipwrecks. In 2025, the OMCT has gauged 4,449 disembarkations following interceptions at sea of people trying to reach Italy by the Tunisian authorities, a figure that is certainly underestimated in the absence of official data. Tunisia is not a safe place for the disembarkation of children intercepted and/or rescued at sea: The OMCT and its partners confirm the lack of identification and assessment of needs, the denial of access to international protection and asylum, the denial of access to humanitarian assistance and child protection. After disembarkation, children are often subjected to family separation, or even forced displacement to borders or deportation, with increased exposure to all kinds of violations.

*«All state representatives, child protection officers, judges, are afraid ... and fear is one of the causes of prosecution against children on the move. We're moving towards the systematic penalization of children on the move.»*

A lawyer defending asylum-seeking and refugee children

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68. Humanitarian source.

69. Humanitarian source.

**Poverty, precariousness and exclusion.** The OMCT has identified several factors explaining the continuing impoverishment of children on the move, including: (I) impossible access to legal and decent employment; (II) declining income-generating activities; (III) lack of family support; (IV) limited international and national child protection systems; (V) and lack of safe accommodation solutions. Three main risks follow as a consequence:

- **Hazardous child labor**, in dangerous and unhealthy working conditions and without any protection of their rights.
- **Survival strategies** adopted by families or the children themselves, which directly or indirectly affect their well-being, such as begging, prostitution and petty crime.
- **Child trafficking**, in the form of economic exploitation through begging or labor, abduction for ransom, or sexual exploitation.

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### **The reality : Hassan's story<sup>70</sup>**

Hassan is a 12-year-old refugee from Sudan living in Tunisia with his mother and three minor siblings. At the beginning of 2024, his mother was arrested at her home by the police and convicted on the basis of her legal status - and Hassan and his siblings were placed in the "Centre d'Encadrement et d'Orientation Sociale" (CEOS) in Sfax by the family judge. Leaving the CEOS unsupervised one day, they were arrested and forcibly and arbitrarily moved to the border with Algeria with another group of people on the move. Managing to return to Tunisia, they reached Sfax thanks to the solidarity of a Tunisian citizen, and were reunited with their mother, who was desperately looking for them. Meanwhile, their mother has lost her apartment and her job, and is forced to beg to support the family. Recently, Hassan was arrested for begging and detained for several weeks, without being able to contact his family.

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70. All first names have been changed.

# GROWING UP IN THE SHADOWS: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS PREVENTING CHILDREN ON THE MOVE FROM LIVING IN DIGNITY AND REACHING ADULthood IN SAFETY

## Violation of the right to legal identity

The right to legal identity is a prerequisite for the exercise of a wide range of human rights. The causes of the violation of this right that emerge from the research are, among others:

- The legal and administrative difficulties encountered by certain categories of parents on the move who are unable to complete the **complex process of registering their children born in Tunisia** - In Tunisia, an increase in undocumented births has been reported.
- **Lack of registration of children's births** prior to entry into Tunisia, and obstacles to issuing or renewing civil status and legal documents at embassies.
- **Loss or confiscation** of identity papers of guardians and minors during arrests, forced removals and deportations by security forces.
- **Negative coping mechanisms** such as identity theft and the deliberate destruction of documents, adopted to circumvent administrative barriers to accessing essential services, generating additional risks.

Hundreds of children without legal identity face denial of access to rights and protection services, risk statelessness, family separation and reduced access to durable solutions (local integration, return/family reunification and resettlement).

## Violation of the right to health

Children on the move face a number of barriers preventing them from accessing care adapted to their growing needs (malnutrition, sexual and reproductive health, infectious diseases, mental health):

- **Administrative and legal barriers**, in particular: (I) the absence of legal and civil documents, (II) especially in relation to out-of-hospital births, (III) and the absence of legal guardians for unaccompanied/separated children.
- Variable **financial barriers** depending on the type of care, aggravated by abusive practices and the shrinking space for civil society in the health field.
- **Barriers inherent to displacement**, notably linguistic and cultural, while mobility and lack of documentation of medical history prevent medical follow-up.
- **Discrimination** within hospital structures, particularly at reception and during treatment, adds to the already high barriers to accessing health services.
- **Regional disparities and a glaring lack of resources** prevent the Tunisian health system from meeting the specific health needs of children on the move.

## Violation of the right to development and education

All the experts and partners consulted by the OMCT have confirmed the systematic blocking of access to education for children on the move, particularly those from sub-Saharan and West Africa. These barriers include:

- **A language barrier** for non-Arabic and non-French-speaking children.
- **Administrative barriers to enrolling children** - particularly in the absence of identity documents and/or legal guardians.
- **Financial barriers**, notably access to kindergartens, which are mostly privately owned, and the exclusion of children on the move from social protection programs.
- **Logistical and security barriers** to physical access to facilities.
- **A lack of resources and specialization** in the Tunisian education system to integrate profiles with different needs.

More generally, the current context and the risks to their safety do not allow children on the move residing in Tunisia to develop in a fulfilling way towards adulthood.

# THE URGENT NEED FOR ENHANCED PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN ON THE MOVE IN TUNISIA

The OMCT identifies two main concerns that should be urgently addressed by Tunisian decision-makers and their partners.

## 1. Inadequate child protection for children on the move at risk in Tunisia

After identifying the structural weaknesses of the child protection system for all children, such as a lack of prevention of situations of danger, an inadequate system for immediate and systematic identification of children at risk, and a lack of coordination between actors, the OMCT analyzes the specific challenges faced by children on the move and the reasons for their poor care by the protection system:

- **Identifying at-risk children on the move** remains particularly difficult, due to a decline in reporting by civil society, limited referrals by state security forces, and restricted access to populations on the move for protection actors. This situation is exacerbated by discriminatory access to public services and fear of the authorities among people on the move.
- **The criminalization and exclusion of children on the move**, reflecting a legal and operational framework that is not very inclusive. This dynamic is exacerbated by under-reporting of violations suffered by the children themselves or by their families/legal guardians, and by an almost systematic transfer of responsibility for protection from state authorities to the United Nations.
- **Discriminatory, undignified and temporary care:** The lack of adequate training for social workers, combined with inadequate protection structures and a lack of coordination between State actors and civil society, leads to unsuitable, inaccessible and time-limited alternative care solutions.

*«If we try to find solutions for foreign minors, the protection services tell us: you've come to the wrong address, go and see the Ministry of the Interior or the Government.»*

A Tunisian association leader

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### The reality : Aïssata's story

Aïssata is a 17-year-old child from Guinea. In 2024, she was deported from Tunisia to Libya. In Libya, she was raped and became pregnant. Having managed to return to Tunisia, she gave birth a few months later - outside hospital. Supported by an association, she was reported to the child protection services for urgent measures of protection. Unfortunately, no center was available to house Aïssata and her baby. The latter was placed in a unit of the "Institut National de la Protection de l'Enfance" (INPE), and Aïssata was granted visiting rights twice a week.

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## 2. Barriers to securing comprehensive, secure and sustainable solutions

In this context, children on the move in Tunisia do not have access to dignified and sustainable solutions:

- **Local integration:** Most children on the move in Tunisia do not have residence permits and are therefore in an irregular situation in the country, while channels for regularization are blocked in practice. Without legal status, children are often deprived of the effective exercise of their rights. Obtaining this status is therefore a key step towards sustainable integration and respect for the «right to have rights».
- **International protection, asylum and resettlement:** Since June 2024, the right to seek asylum has been suspended in Tunisia, under pressure from the Government. This means that: (i) all families with children, as well as separated or unaccompanied children, who entered Tunisia after June 2024, have no possibility of registering as asylum seekers or benefiting from international protection; (ii) children registered as asylum seekers benefit from only partial protection and cannot obtain refugee status, preventing them from being considered for resettlement to a third country; (iii) other families and children on the move who were not registered with UNHCR before June 2024 find themselves in a legal limbo, unable to benefit from any form of international protection.
- **Voluntary repatriation:** The lack of identity documents and proof of family ties and nationality often prevent voluntary repatriation as well as efforts for family reunification.

This prolonged legal situation, generating uncertainty and denying access to durable solutions, impacts on children's development, marginalizing them and leading to greater exposure to violations and discrimination. The constant possibility of arrest and deportation outweighs the viability of life and destabilizes children's sense of identity and security. Their trust in international institutions and organizations is eroded, further distancing them from protection and assistance schemes.



# CONCLUSION

The intersection of multiple violations exacerbates the vulnerability of children on the move, the majority of whom are already living in undignified conditions, marked by the precariousness of their status and uncertainty about their future. Each violation they suffer leads to or encourages the emergence of other forms of abuse, fueling cycles of violence from which it is extremely difficult for them to escape. Unaccompanied children are particularly at risk: many of them have been victims of abuse and exploitation on their way to Tunisia and remain at risk due to the lack of appropriate and effective protection services.

The research highlights structural weaknesses in Tunisia's public child protection system, designed to provide protection for all children at risk, without discrimination or distinction of status or nationality. The principle of the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration in all government measures. Yet current practices are often at odds with this principle and related obligations. In this context of restricted access to protection, people and children on the move are deprived of both justice and rehabilitation measures - including psychological support, which is essential for the rehabilitation of victims. At the same time, the perpetrators of violations, whether state or non-state, enjoy persistent impunity, reinforced by the systematic under-reporting of violence by victims, the difficulty of collecting evidence, and the complexity of identifying and qualifying crimes, accentuated by the transnational dimension of many of these abuses.

In the absence of reparation and rehabilitation, the processes of integration in the country of transit or destination, resettlement in a third country, or return and reintegration in the country of origin, cannot be sustainable. The stories and testimonies collected and analyzed in this report illustrate the inextricable link between the fulfilment of children's rights and the possibility to safely reach adulthood, and how the current situation in Tunisia compromises both. Research confirms that children on the move who have suffered violence before or during their migratory journey bear the after-effects of long-lasting trauma, face the precariousness associated with lack of legal status and social instability in the country of transit, and struggle to become adults and integrate or reintegrate into their communities. Children arriving at EU borders face inadequate and protracted procedures for identifying and assessing their vulnerability, de facto detention, and obstacles to accessing asylum procedures. Combined with the outsourcing of border management to third countries with inadequate child protection systems, these obstacles erode the legal safeguards in place to protect children.

Modifying current migration management in the best interests of the child and addressing existing gaps in the child protection system for all children in Tunisia is necessary to ensure that new generations grow up in security and prosperity.

# RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Respect the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment.
2. Put an end to the detention of children on the move and provide them with alternatives to detention.
3. Ensure that border management measures take into account the specific protection needs of children.
4. Ensure that all children on the move have access to birth registration and a legal identity.
5. Guarantee access to healthcare, including mental health services, for children on the move.
6. Extend access to education and vocational training to children on the move.
7. Guarantee equal access to national child protection services for all children, regardless of their administrative status and nationality.
8. Promote safe and dignified access to third countries for families with children and unaccompanied refugee children, including resettlement and, where possible, family reunification.

## ***1. Respect the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment***

- Ensure that no person, and in particular no child, is exposed to institutional violence, and that human dignity is respected and protected, in accordance with the Tunisian Constitution and duly ratified international instruments.
- Ensure prompt, impartial and effective investigations, opened ex officio when there are reasonable grounds to believe that an act of torture or ill-treatment has been committed; protect complainants and witnesses against reprisals; suspend implicated agents during the investigation; prosecute and punish appropriately; guarantee full reparation for victims. Ensure that general inspectorates of the security forces have sufficient resources, expertise and independence to guarantee effective and impartial investigations into allegations of torture and ill-treatment.
- Deploy mandatory and periodic modules for National Guard, police and prison staff on the absolute prohibition, procedural safeguards, identification/prevention of ill-treatment (including against children and people on the move), standard-compliant use of force, and documentation in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol; incorporate practical exercises and impact assessment mechanisms. Link these training courses with the mission of the National Authority for the Prevention of Torture (INPT) and the recommendations of the UN Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT), in order to improve practices during visits and follow-up.

## ***2. Put an end to the detention of children on the move and promote alternatives to detention***

- Adopt and implement clear legal and policy safeguards to ensure that children on the move, particularly unaccompanied and separated children, are not detained on the basis of their administrative status, prioritizing placement in the child protection system in line with the Tunisian Child Protection Code and international commitments.
- Expand alternative care options, notably by strengthening social protection centers for temporary care, developing foster care and supervised independent living for older children, and guaranteeing individualized care to avoid prolonged detention due to a lack of alternatives.

## ***3. Adopt border management measures that comply with international law***

- Respect the principle of non-refoulement and refrain from deporting people on the move, particularly children, to third countries.
- Refrain from forcibly returning or moving children to border areas where their lives and physical integrity could be endangered, and where the risk of becoming victims of human trafficking is increased.
- Put in place border management measures enabling the identification of children, including unaccompanied children, and their immediate referral to appropriate services. This also includes children disembarked in Tunisia following rescue operations or interception at sea.
- Refrain from implementing border and migration management measures that could, in certain circumstances, lead to the separation of children from their families or caregivers.

#### ***4. Ensure that all children on the move have access to birth registration and legal identity***

- Set up a simplified administrative or judicial procedure, with a realistic timeframe, enabling children born en route or in Tunisia to parents on the move to be registered with the civil registry within a reasonable timeframe.
- Ensure free and accessible birth registration and put in place effective safeguards to prevent statelessness and ensure every child's right to acquire a nationality and legal identity

#### ***5. Guarantee the right of access to health care and education***

- Guarantee access to adequate water and sanitation facilities, drinking water, hygiene services and waste management for people on the move, regardless of their legal status and without discrimination, giving priority to those stranded in the informal settlements of El Amra.
- Strive to remove all legal, bureaucratic, administrative, logistical and financial obstacles faced by people on the move in order to facilitate their access to health facilities throughout the country and implement emergency programs to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health rights, childcare services and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Carry out awareness-raising campaigns to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and inform women on the move of their rights and how to access appropriate services, notably by setting up emergency accommodation facilities for pregnant women and other members of vulnerable groups in hospitals. In addition, language training for healthcare professionals can help improve the quality and speed of care.
- Grant international and national humanitarian actors access to areas with high concentrations of people on the move, and enable them to detect and treat infectious diseases, in coordination with the Tunisian Red Crescent and the relevant health authorities.
- Remove obstacles that prevent children on the move from enrolling in public schools and vocational training programs.
- Ensure that all children on the move have access to immunization programs, maternal and neonatal care and essential pediatric health services, regardless of their administrative status.
- Develop protocols and training for medical staff to address the specific health and psychosocial needs of children on the move, including trauma-informed care.

## ***6. Ensure access to national child protection programs***

- Officially include children on the move in the national child protection system, in accordance with national legislation, guaranteeing them equal access to care, alternative care structures and specialized protection services.
- Strengthen protection solutions and reception capacities, as well as specialized child protection measures for unaccompanied and separated children, including by setting up pilot accommodation projects for unaccompanied foreign children, with donor support.
- Recognize the positive role of civil society organizations in implementing child protection programs, including shelter programs, for children on the move, in coordination with the authorities and UN agencies.

## ***7. Guarantee access to dignified and sustainable solutions***

- Lift the suspension of asylum registration and refugee status determination, and resume identification and effective access to asylum in the country for all people on the move, including new arrivals and those intercepted/recovered at sea, to enable assessment of their identity, vulnerability and international protection needs.
- Design and implement programs, mechanisms and initiatives aimed at regularizing temporary stay in the country, seeking comprehensive, sustainable and dignified solutions, including safe and regular channels for migration (e.g. including complementary pathways to access to education, employment, family reunification and resettlement opportunities) in order to remedy the situation of «status uncertainty and precariousness» that leads many children on the move to a prolonged and indefinite legal limbo.
- Support and, as far as possible, speed up the examination of family reunification applications concerning unaccompanied and separated children on the move who are awaiting a decision.

# TEMPORAL ANALYSIS

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# CHRONOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS

Thanks to the solid and often risky work of numerous organizations and human rights defenders, the OMCT has been able to enumerate successive human rights violations against people on the move in Tunisia between November 2024 and April 2025. The chronology below showcases the evolution of the situation of people on the move, who are often unaware of their rights and whose voices go unheard. The chronology includes major violations, legal proceedings against people on the move' rights defenders, as well as references to hate speech and statements.<sup>1</sup> Without claiming to be exhaustive, this chronology is the fruit of meticulous continuous monitoring and the triangulation of information<sup>2</sup> by the OMCT and its partners.



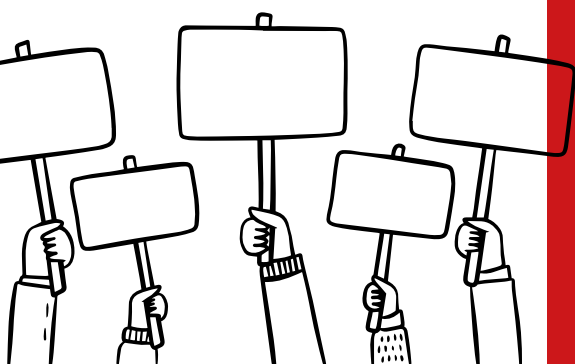
05/11  
20  
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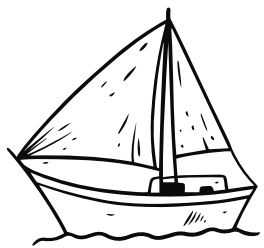
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA CHAIRS A MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. ON THIS OCCASION, THE HEAD OF STATE CALLED FOR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO BE INTENSIFIED, WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING THE «VOLUNTARY» RETURN OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS ON TUNISIAN SOIL TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN<sup>3</sup>.



07/11

Families of Tunisian citizens missing at sea stage a sit-in in front of the Italian Embassy in Tunis to demand the truth about the fate of their loved ones and the results of the commission of inquiry set up in 2015 on the subject by the Italian Ministry of Social Affairs.<sup>4</sup>





11/11

Tunisian police dismantle a metal boat workshop in Ariana.<sup>6</sup>

09/11

18 PEOPLE from Sierra Leone, including three pregnant women and four children, are forcibly and arbitrarily moved to Algerian borders northwest of Gafsa by the Tunisian authorities after an interception at sea on 02/11, and suffer several refoulements within a week.<sup>5</sup>

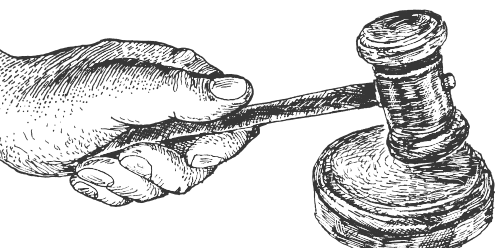
12/11

THE PRESIDENT OF AN ASSOCIATION ASSISTING VULNERABLE PERSONS IN SOUTHERN TUNISIA IS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AND THEN REMANDED IN CUSTODY.<sup>7</sup>



14/11

TUNISIAN COURTS FREEZE THE ASSETS OF SEVERAL ASSOCIATIONS AS PART OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO SUSPICIOUS FOREIGN FINANCING.<sup>8</sup>



16/11



THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS declares in Parliament that Tunisia «categorically refuses to become a transit platform or a temporary or permanent host country for irregular migrants - but remains a safe and hospitable country for foreign nationals, particularly those from African countries, provided their

presence is regular and motivated by legitimate reasons such as study, tourism, health care or economic and commercial activities».<sup>9</sup>

18/11

TWENTY ASSOCIATIONS DENOUNCE THE TARGETING OF TUNISIAN FREEDOMS AND ACTIVISTS, THROUGH THE ESCALATION OF JUDICIAL AND SECURITY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ACTIVISTS, TRADE UNIONISTS AND COMMITTED CITIZENS.<sup>10</sup>

26/11

Violent intervention by the Tunisian National Guard near Jbeniana during operations to dismantle informal settlements in olive groves. Several people are injured.<sup>11</sup>





07/12

After a seven-month ban on leaving the country, a **Danish journalist** arrested for reporting on the situation of people on the move is allowed to leave Tunisia.<sup>13</sup>

06/12



A **pregnant Guinean woman** dies at kilometer 19 of the El Amra informal settlements, after lack of urgent medical care.<sup>12</sup>

12/12

**Arrest of the director of a civil society organization** promoting minority rights, as part of an investigation into suspicious foreign funding.<sup>14</sup>

12/12

**VIOLENT INTERVENTION IN EL AMRA AS PART OF OPERATIONS TO DISMANTLE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS. PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND TENTS ARE DESTROYED AND/OR BURNT.**<sup>15</sup>

18/12

**HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS MOBILIZE FOR INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS' DAY AND CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF DETAINEES AND A HALT TO PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ALL VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS TO ASSIST PEOPLE ON THE MOVE.**<sup>17</sup>

18/12

According to the National Guard, the number of people crossing the borders irregularly has decreased, «a success for National Guard and Army units in protecting land and sea borders, operating 24/7 effectively to prevent infiltration and illegal border crossings».<sup>16</sup>

23/12

Three people from sub-Saharan African countries are **arrested in La Marsa** for «**unauthorized religious practices**», and irregular residence in La Marsa.<sup>18</sup>



29/12

Census carried out by the Tunisian authorities at Kilometer 30 in the informal settlements, supervised by the National Guard.<sup>21</sup>

26/12

A Guinean woman dies in El Amra of carbon monoxide poisoning after lighting a fire in her tent.<sup>19</sup>



31/12

At least 31,404 people were expelled from Algeria at the Niger border during 2024 via the Assamaka desert area (26,031 people in 2023).<sup>22</sup>



2025

02/01

8 people of Gambian nationality are forcibly moved by the Tunisian National Guard to a desert area on the border with Algeria, after being intercepted at sea on 30/12. Several of them report injuries inflicted by security agents.<sup>23</sup>

08/01

Large-scale security operation in Sfax to combat irregular migration and drug trafficking; 633 individuals arrested by the National Guard.<sup>25</sup>



03/01

A migrant is attacked in Sfax by several Tunisian citizens, who wound him with a machete in order to rob him.<sup>24</sup>

18/01

THE BODY OF A MIGRANT FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IS FOUND IN A REMOTE MOUNTAIN AREA ON THE BORDER WITH ALGERIA NEAR HAÏDRA.<sup>26</sup>

19/01

Rally in La Marsa in support of Sherifa Riahi, ex-director of Terre d'Asile, and other defenders of the rights of people on the move in detention since May 2024. «Offering help, shelter or care should never be considered a crime» said a relative of the detained activist.<sup>27</sup>



21/01

A National Guard spokesman declares that Tunisia is «a sovereign state and not a transit country», adding that «we are not border guards... Our maritime borders are not to be violated».<sup>28</sup>

23/01

To mark National Day for the Abolition of Slavery in Tunisia, CSOs and families of human rights defenders organize an event to denounce that those, who assist people on the move, are being targeted.<sup>30</sup>

25/01

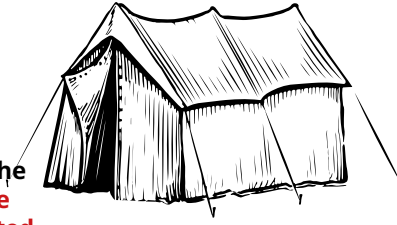
A Tunisian MP calls on the government to adopt a «Donald Trump-inspired» policy on deporting irregular migrants, citing what she calls «the case of the Sub-Saharanans».<sup>32</sup>

29/01

A report entitled «State Trafficking: Expulsion and sale of migrants from Tunisia to Libya», implicates the Tunisian state's involvement in possible cases of sale and trafficking of people on the move. The document contains 30 testimonies from people expelled from Tunisia to Libya between June 2023 and November 2024. All testimonies reveal cases of «sale of human beings on the Tunisian-Libyan borders», as well as an interconnection between «the infrastructure behind the expulsions [from Tunisia] and the kidnapping industry in Libyan prisons».

22/01

According to the Director of the General Inspectorate of the National Guard, 20,000 people on the move have been counted in El Amra's informal settlements. 22 nationalities are represented.<sup>29</sup>



24/01

A columnist was sentenced to one year and six months in prison under Decree 54 for denouncing on the radio the existence of racism against people from sub-Saharan Africa in Tunisia.<sup>31</sup>

27/01

THE TUNISIAN PARLIAMENT EXAMINES DRAFT LAW NO. 082/2024 ON THE «REGULATION OF THE EXPULSION OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS», WHICH WOULD AUTHORIZE THE EXPULSION OF IRREGULAR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE.<sup>33</sup>

05/02

The National Authority for the Prevention of Torture (INPT) warns that the number of detainees has risen from around 22,000 in 2018-2021 to over 32,000 at present, causing detention conditions to deteriorate. More than 60% of inmates in Tunisian prisons are said to be in pre-trial detention, without being sentenced.<sup>34</sup>



06/02

The families of those missing at sea between Tunisia and Italy call for the creation of an office to deal with this issue within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with a view to stepping up efforts to find their loved ones, dead or alive.<sup>35</sup>

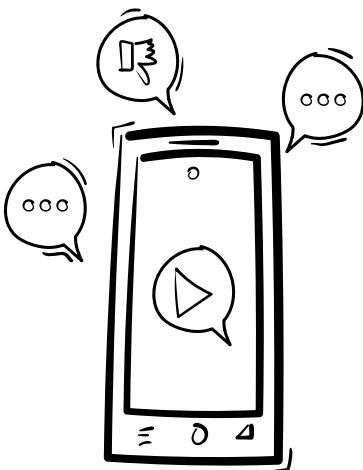


13/02

Money-laundering charges dropped against three former managers of the CSO "Terre d'Asile Tunisie", who were being prosecuted for helping people on the move. Twelve leaders of associations and activists are still in detention for their support for people on the move and their anti-racist work, eight of them since May 2024.<sup>37</sup>

15/02

The dissemination of erroneous information about the alleged murder of a National Guard officer by people on the move in Sfax fuels viral racist and xenophobic publications on social networks. The officer died in 2020 of cardiac arrest.<sup>40</sup>



07/02

In response to the publication of the «State Trafficking» report, the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirms «its constant attachment to humanitarian principles and its full respect for international conventions guaranteeing human rights and dignity», and adopts «a balanced approach that reconciles its duty to protect borders, respect for national sovereignty and laws, and the commitment to honor its international obligations - (including) the humanitarian measures necessary to guarantee irregular migrants protection from criminal human trafficking networks that exploit their vulnerable situation».<sup>36</sup>

13/02

A Tunisian MP calls for «birth limitation and control among sub-Saharan migrants», describing such births as «hemorrhaging» and a risk to Tunisia's demographic make-up<sup>38</sup>. Several Tunisian CSOs denounced the xenophobic outburst and called for maternity wards not to be turned into «a space for racism».<sup>39</sup>

18/02

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called on Tunisia to «put an end to the wave of arrests, arbitrary detention and imprisonment of dozens of human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, activists and political figures» and to guarantee a fair trial and due process to those accused.<sup>41</sup>

25/02

The Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted to the press release issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, stating that it had received «with deep amazement the inaccuracies and criticisms contained in the press release issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, concerning the situation of certain Tunisian citizens who are subject of legal proceedings by the national justice system» and reiterating «its attachment to the protection of human rights» and its respect «for the provisions of its Constitution, its national laws and its international commitments at regional and international level».<sup>42</sup>

**MARCH 2025**

Housing eviction campaign for people on the move in Zarzis and Médenine, followed by deportations to Libya via Ben Guerdane.<sup>45</sup>



**27/02**

In the wake of the refusal to release the former director of Terre d'Asile, Sherifa Riahi,<sup>43</sup> civil society organizations in Sousse express their deep indignation at the prolonged detention of several personalities involved in defending the rights of people on the move, including the city's former mayor, for over 290 days, for partnership agreements to assist vulnerable people between the municipality and associations.<sup>44</sup>

**03/03**

A Tunisian MP compares the situation of people on the move living in informal camps north of Sfax in undignified conditions to colonization and denounces «terrorist acts» committed by people on the move.<sup>46</sup>

**03/03**

Several bills relating to migration are tabled in the Tunisian Assembly by deputies from Sfax, including measures such as a ban on the granting of Tunisian nationality to foreign children born in Tunisia to parents in an irregular situation; «the prohibition of the acquisition and possession of unregistered land, as well as all real estate operations on Tunisian soil, and the promulgation of a law to protect the security forces and armed military during the exercise of their missions in the fight against irregular migration».<sup>47</sup>

**07/03**

Tunisia withdraws its declaration made under article 34(6) of the Protocol to the African Court, which allows individuals and CSOs to bring individual complaints directly before the African Court.<sup>48</sup>

**07/03**

DURING A VISIT AT INFORMAL SETTLEMENT NEAR SFAJ, A TUNISIAN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT DENOUNCES MAKESHIFT FACILITIES IMPROVISING HEALTHCARE AS «A STATE WITHIN A STATE» ON SOCIAL NETWORKS.<sup>49</sup>

**09/03**



TENSE DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF THE JIBENIANA DELEGATION HEADQUARTERS AGAINST THE PRESENCE OF PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS NEAR THE TOWN.<sup>50</sup>

**11/03**

MP calls to forcibly displace people on the move to «camps far from urban areas» as well as to carry out mass deportations of people on the move of sub-Saharan origin present in Tunisia.<sup>51</sup>

**12/03**

Several violent incidents target people on the move evicted from informal settlements and chased by Tunisian citizens and security forces in the Ariana Governorate<sup>52</sup> and Sfax.<sup>53</sup>

**12/03**

THE OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN FOR THE JULY 25 MOVEMENT THAT SUPPORTS THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, CALLS FOR «A RADICAL AND DEFINITIVE SOLUTION» TO THE PRESENCE OF PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IN EL AMRA, AND DENOUNCES «THE BEGINNING OF A COLONIZATION».<sup>54</sup>



13/03

49 people on the move are intercepted at the Tunisian-Libyan border by Libyan border guards and transferred to the Al Assah detention center in Libya.<sup>56</sup>

13/03

Prolongation of the detention of Saadia Mosbah, a human rights activist imprisoned since May 2024 for her anti-racist stand against the xenophobic wave affecting people on the move in Tunisia.<sup>55</sup>

15/03

The Tunisian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LTDH) denounces the «repressive security response or racist rhetoric that acts as a safety valve for a poorly managed crisis» regarding the management of the presence of people on the move in informal settlements in the governorate of Sfax and calls for an end to the human rights violations of which they are victims.<sup>59</sup>



14/03

THE TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO THE COMMUNICATION FROM SEVERAL UN SPECIAL PROCEDURES. THE GOVERNMENT REFUTES ALLEGATIONS OF DANGEROUS MANEUVERS AT SEA, ARBITRARY ARRESTS, COMPLICITY IN TRAFFICKING, WITHOUT RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF DEPORTATIONS, EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE DURING OPERATIONS BY SECURITY FORCES, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, DENIAL OF ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND FAILURE TO IDENTIFY VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.<sup>58</sup>

17/03

The CSO France Terre d'Asile expresses its concern at the prolonged detention of the managers of its Tunisian branch for acts falling within the association's official mandate, despite the dropping of some of the charges against them.<sup>62</sup>

17/03

A TUNISIAN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT MAKES RACIST REMARKS ABOUT PEOPLE ON THE MOVE FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, DECLARING THAT «LIFE IS GOOD IN TUNISIA. TUNISIANS ARE NATURALLY WELCOMING... SO MAMADOU MAKES HIMSELF AT HOME AND SITS AT THE CAFÉ»<sup>60</sup>. HE ALSO CALLED FOR THE REINTRODUCTION OF ENTRY VISAS TO TUNISIA FOR ALL NATIONALS OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRIES, AND THEIR SYSTEMATIC EXPULSION IN COORDINATION WITH THE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN.<sup>61</sup>

17/03

FOLLOWING THE INTERCEPTION OF 612 PEOPLE BY THE TUNISIAN COAST GUARD, SEVERAL HUNDRED OF THEM, INCLUDING CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN, ARE FORCIBLY MOVED ACROSS THE CHAAMBI MOUNTAIN RANGE TO THE ALGERIAN BORDER. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS' MARCHING, SOME REACHED TEBESSA IN ALGERIA. OTHER GROUPS WERE REPORTEDLY DEPORTED TO LIBYA.<sup>64</sup>

19/03

Expulsion followed by arrests of several dozen people travelling to Sousse.<sup>63</sup>



21/03

To mark World Day against Racial Discrimination, 23 Tunisian associations launch an urgent appeal to combat racism and racial discrimination in Tunisia and denounce the normalization of hate speech.<sup>66</sup>

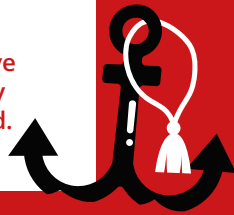


20/03

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE PARTI DESTOURIEN LIBRE (PDL) DECLARES THAT MIGRATION «REPRESENTS A DANGER THREATENING STABILITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY», STATING THAT «TUNISIANS NO LONGER FEEL SAFE IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY AND CALLED ON THE STATE TO ASSUME ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO REMEDY THE SITUATION».<sup>65</sup>

03/04

Beginning of a massive security campaign to destroy the makeshift camps located on the private estate of Henchir Ben Farhat in El Amra,<sup>68</sup> resulting in the forced displacement of several thousand people to state-owned land a few kilometers away, more than 7,000 according to the National Guard.<sup>69</sup> Several dozen people are reported to have been arrested, and no emergency accommodation has been offered.



28/03

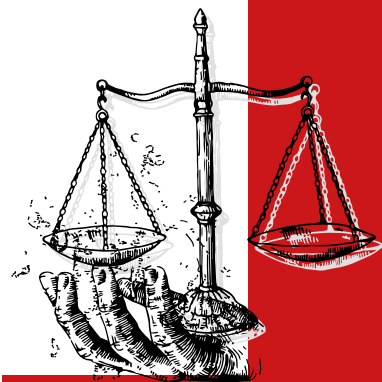
A human rights defender involved in the 18/18 movement, a citizens' mobilization demanding the truth about a shipwreck in Zarzis in 2018, is again the subject of a judicial investigation.<sup>67</sup>

06/04

The President of the Republic declares that «Tunisia's treatment of sub-Saharan migrants is humanitarian and ethical, without precedent in the world».<sup>70</sup>

09/04

A man of Guinean nationality dies in El Amra during tensions between migrant communities. Dozens are injured.<sup>71</sup>



10/04

A bill is submitted to the Assembly of People's Representatives concerning the expulsion of irregular migrants.<sup>72</sup>

24-25/04

SECURITY FORCES MOUNT NEW OPERATIONS TO DISMANTLE THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS OF HANCHIR KERKENI AND HMAÏZIA IN EL AMRA.<sup>73</sup> INFORMAL STRUCTURES ARE BURNT DOWN, AND SEVERAL THOUSAND PEOPLE ARE EVACUATED AND, ACCORDING TO THE AUTHORITIES, ARE MOVED TO EL HACHICH WITH NO ALTERNATIVE HOUSING.<sup>74</sup> THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE DECLARES THAT «THE DISMANTLING OF ILLEGAL MIGRANT CAMPS AND SETTLEMENTS IS TAKING PLACE IN FULL RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES».<sup>75</sup>

28/04

Videos of Tunisian citizens kidnapping people on the move before handing them over to the National Guard are posted on social networks.<sup>76</sup>

# NOTES

1. As the monitoring work is carried out mainly in French and English, the extent of hate speech disseminated online and in the Tunisian media is not represented in this timeline.
2. Sources include interviews with civil society organizations on the ground and with experts working in Tunisia, a review of press articles and academic research papers, viewing and analysis of publicly available videos and photos, as well as referrals by partner organizations and human rights defenders.
3. «Corruption and migrants on the table of the National Security Council», 05/11/2024, Mosaïque FM
4. «Tunisie - Sit-in des familles de migrants disparus : un appel à l'Italie pour des réponses», 07/11/2024, La Presse
5. Refugees in Libya on X
6. «Raoued : Découverte d'un atelier clandestin de fabrication de bateaux en métal», 11/11/2024, Kapitalis
7. Abdallah Said placed in police custody for his humanitarian commitment to migrants», 15/11/2024, Business News
8. «Assets of several associations frozen, including I Watch and Mourakiboun», 14/11/2024, Business News
9. «Mohamed Ali Nafti details Tunisia's strategy to deal with clandestine migration», 16/11/2024, Business News
10. «Twenty associations denounce targeting of Tunisian freedoms and activists», 18/11/2024, Business News
11. Refugees in Libya on X
12. Refugees in Libya on X
13. «#1 arrested - but why?», 03/01/2025, The School of Tunisia
14. «Association secretary general arrested for suspicious foreign funding», 12/12/2024, Réalités. See also «Growing pressure on civil society: the case of Saloua Ghrissa», 10/05/2024, Business News
15. Refugees in Libya on X
16. «Tunisia reports decrease in migrants via land and sea», 12/20/2024, InfoMigrants
17. «International Migrants Day: mobilization against the criminalization of solidarity», 12/18/2024, Business News
18. «Tunisia: Arrest of three sub-Saharan Africans accused of unauthorized religious practices in La Marsa», 12/23/2024, La Presse
19. «In Tunisia, several migrants die of carbon monoxide poisoning in the olive groves of Sfax», 12/28/2024, InfoMigrants
20. Refugees in Libya on X
21. MArino Dubois on Facebook
22. Alarm Phone Sahara
23. Refugees in Libya on X
24. Refugees in Libya on X
25. «Tunisia : Large security operation in Sfax, 633 individuals arrested», 08/01/2025, Webdo
26. «Tunisie - Tragédie à Kasserine : un migrant subsaharien retrouvé mort en montagne», 18/01/2025, La Presse
27. «Rally in La Marsa in support of Sherifa Riahi and migrants' rights activists», 19/01/2025, Business News
28. «Houssemmeddine Jebabli: 'Tunisia is a sovereign state and we are not someone else's border guards', 21/01/2025, Réalités
29. «More than 20,000 migrants in Sfax, embarkation point for Europe», 23/01/2025, Kapitalis
30. «Tunisia: rally of migrants' defenders on the occasion of the day of the abolition of slavery», 23/01/2025, RFI
31. «Wave of indignation following Sonia Dahmani's conviction», 24/01/2025, Business News
32. «Fatma Mseddi: 'The State is in danger'», 24/01/2025, Business News
33. See Projet de loi 2024/82 and «Tunisie : le Parlement cherche à légaliser l'expulsion des migrants», 27/01/2025, The New Arab
34. «Tunisian prisons: INPT warns of alarming overcrowding», 05/02/2025, Business News
35. «The families of those missing at the maritime border between Tunisia and Italy call for the creation of an office to deal with the issue», 06/02/2025, Le Temps
36. Tunisie Diplomatie on X
37. «Charges of conspiracy and money laundering against Riahi, Bousselmi and Jouou dropped», 13/02/2025, Business News
38. «Fatma Mseddi: 'We need birth control for sub-Saharan migrants', 02/13/2025, Business News
39. «Fatma Mseddi and birth control for migrant women: NGOs denounce a fascist drift», 02/17/2025, Business News
40. «National Guard officer killed by sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia: beware of this false information», 02/17/2025, Business News
41. «UN denounces persecution of opponents in Tunisia», 18/02/2025, RTBF
42. «A week late, the MAE finally reacts to the incendiary statement by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights», 25/02/2025, Business News
43. «Refusal to release Sherifa Riahi», 26/02/2025, Business News
44. «Soussse : la société civile s'insigne contre la répression des défenseurs des droits des migrants», 27/02/2025, Business News
45. Humanitarian source
46. «Tarek Mehdi warns of rising violence in El Amra and Jebeniana», 04/03/2025, Business News
47. «MP unveils proposals for irregular migrants», 03/03/2025, African Manager
48. «Tunisia withdraws from African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights», 03/2025, Business News
49. «In the heart of the migrant camp: Fatma Mseddi's video raises controversy», 07/03/2025, Business News
50. TounsDawla on X
51. «Tarak Mahdi: sub-Saharan migrants must be moved to camps away from urban areas», 11/03/2025, Business News
52. Gargabil on X
53. Marino Dubois on Facebook
54. «La mouvance du 25 juillet appelle à une solution radicale au problème des migrants subsahariens», 12/03/2025, Tunisie Numérique
55. «Saadia Mosbah's detention extended», 13/03/2025, Mosaïque FM
56. Migrant Rescue Watch on X
57. This communication concerns the interception of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants at sea and was sent by various UN Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups on human trafficking, racial discrimination, enforced disappearances, human rights defenders, migrants' rights and racial discrimination. See AL TUN (6.2024)
58. HRC/NONE/2025/SP/16
59. «LTDH denounces violence against sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia», 17/03/2025, Kapitalis
60. «Mamadou at the café: MP's outrageous comments on migrants», 17/03/2025, Business News
61. «Tunisie - Crise migratoire : Les propos d'un député font polémique», 17/03/2025, Webdo
62. «Tunisia | France terre d'asile demande a fair examination of the facts for its employees and calls for their release», 17/03/2025, Kapitalis
63. TounsDawla on X
64. «Thameur Saad : Le PDL considère la question migratoire comme une menace pour la sûreté nationale», 20/03/2025, Business News
65. «Tunisia: hundreds of migrants intercepted at sea disappear from radar», 03/27/2025, InfoMigrants
66. «Grand remplacement, discours racistes : des associations dénoncent une dérive inquiétante», 20/03/2025, Business News
67. «Activist Ali Kniss summoned by the National Guard», 28/03/2025, Business News
68. «En Tunisie, les autorités démantèlent les camps de migrants de Sfax : « Elles ont tout mis à terre, tout brûlé », 07/04/2025, Le Monde
69. «Jebabli: the Henir Ben Farhat camp housed 4,000 migrants», 05/04/2025, Business News
70. «Saïed: 'Tunisia's treatment of sub-Saharan migrants was humanitarian and ethical, unprecedented in the world', 06/04/2025, Tuniscope
71. «Tunisia: one dead after clashes between migrants camping in olive groves», 10/04/2025, Brut
72. Draft law, ARP
73. «El Amra : les forces de l'ordre démantèlent un campement de migrants», 24/04/2025, Business News
74. «Mass evacuation in El Amra: migrant camps being dismantled», 04/25/2025, Business News
75. «Tunisie : à partir de mai, un vol par semaine pour rapatrier les subsahariens dans des opérations de retour volontaire», 04/25/2025, Tunisie Numérique
76. «Videos of stalking and abduction of sub-Saharan migrants: a Tunisian causes outrage», Business News, 04/29/2025

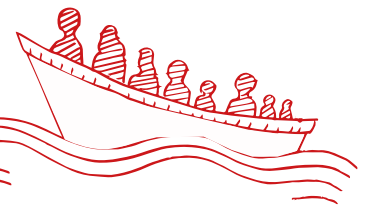
# CHRONOLOGY OF OPERATIONS AT SEA

The chronology below contains a selection of incidents and events deemed important for understanding the nature and impact of certain maritime operations carried out to control irregular departures from the Tunisian coast. Without claiming to be exhaustive, this chronology stems from continuous monitoring and triangulation of information and sources<sup>77</sup> by the OMCT and its partners.

01/11

20  
24

**The CSO *Mediterranea Saving Humans*** lodged an appeal to overturn the administrative detention of humanitarian vessel *Mare Jonio* for a period of 20 days (since October 15), following the rescue of 58 people in distress in international waters in the SAR zone under Tunisian jurisdiction in October 2025. The vessel then disembarked in Sicily after its disembarking in the port of Naples was refused, deemed too far away. A second appeal is lodged against the refusal to certify the *Mare Jonio* as a «rescue vessel» on the register.<sup>78</sup>



08/11

**A woman gives birth in the middle of the sea on a National Guard boat** following a rescue operation of a boat in distress during an attempt to reach Italy.<sup>81</sup>



07/11

A boat carrying **80 PEOPLE**, including a dozen pregnant women and children, including unaccompanied minors, is reported to have capsized following an attempted interception by the Tunisian National Guard off the coast of Sfax. **52 PEOPLE** are reported to have lost their lives, while **23** were rescued by fishermen before being deported to Libya for some, and abandoned in a desert area for another.<sup>79</sup> The Tunisian authorities deny this.<sup>80</sup>

14/11

**55 PEOPLE FROM GAMBIA, GUINEA AND MALI ARE IN DISTRESS AT SEA** AFTER LEAVING SFAX IN THE NIGHT ON A MAKESHIFT BOAT BOUND FOR LAMPEDUSA.<sup>82</sup> AFTER AN ENGINE FAILURE OFF KERKENNAH, THEY WERE RESCUED BY NATIONAL GUARD MARITIME UNITS AND LANDED IN SFAX.<sup>83</sup>

15/11

A boat leaving on 13/11 with **52 people on board capsizes off the coast of Sfax**. The survivors were rescued by Tunisian fishermen, while 16 people, including two young children, were reported missing.<sup>84</sup>

15/11

SHIPWRECK OF A BOAT LEAVING SFAX ON 14/11 WITH 58 PEOPLE ON BOARD FROM GUINEA, CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND GUINEA CONAKRY, **INCLUDING CHILDREN. 24 PEOPLE ARE RESCUED BY THE TUNISIAN NATIONAL GUARD AND LANDED IN TUNISIA.**<sup>85</sup>

29/11

**28 people are rescued and two bodies fished out** after the shipwreck of a boat from Teboulba with 31 people on board, mostly of Tunisian origin, 21 miles from Mahdia.<sup>86</sup>



04/12

**Three boats from the Sfax coastline disappeared between 27/11 and 30/11 with a total of 164 people on board.**<sup>87</sup>

04/12

In Italy, the Italian Senate strengthens decree-law 1/2023, known as the «Piantadosi Decree»<sup>88</sup> with decree-law 145/2024, known as the «Flow Decree».<sup>89</sup> By providing new possibilities for fines and arrests, it exacerbates the extremely punitive provisions regulating rescue operations, **facilitating the arrest of rescue vessels and limiting the action of aircraft used by CSOs in monitoring the central Mediterranean.** The main search and rescue CSOs in the Central Mediterranean express their concern.<sup>90</sup>



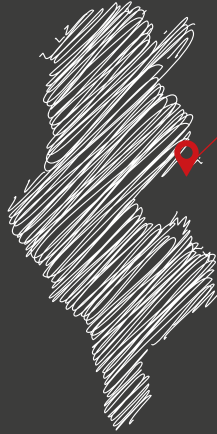
11/12

After three days in distress in the water at sea, an 11-year-old girl from Sierra Leone is **rescued by a humanitarian ship and landed in Lampedusa**. She is the only survivor of a shipwrecked boat that set out from Sfax with 45 people on board on November 8.<sup>91</sup>



13/12

The CSO Médecins Sans Frontières announces the end of search and rescue operations by its vessel **Geo Barents**, operational since June 2021. Having rescued 12,675 people in 190 operations, the humanitarian vessel was detained for 160 days by sanctions from the Italian authorities as part of the application of the Piantedosi decree,<sup>94</sup> and spent the equivalent of six months reaching distant ports assigned by the Italian authorities for disembarkation.<sup>95</sup> MSF considers «that it is untenable to operate the Geo Barents under such absurd Italian laws and policies. The rescue capacity of humanitarian vessels is grossly under-utilized and actively undermined by Italian authorities».



15/12

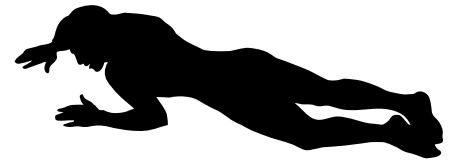
A boat leaving Tunisia with a majority of Sudanese nationals on board capsized, **causing at least fifteen deaths.**<sup>97</sup>

18/12

The National Guard spokesman states that «**last year, more than 95,000 migrants managed to gain access to Europe, this year it's only 19,000**», welcoming the redirection of migratory flows to other transit countries.<sup>100</sup>

12/12

A BOAT LEAVING J BENIANA WITH **42 PEOPLE ON BOARD CAPSIZED OFF MAHDIA.** 27 PEOPLE FROM CAMEROON, GUINEA AND SENEGAL WERE RESCUED BY NATIONAL GUARD MARITIME UNITS OFF J BENIANA, NINE BODIES WERE RECOVERED AND SIX PEOPLE WERE REPORTED MISSING. SEVERAL DOZEN PEOPLE WERE REPORTED MISSING AFTER DISEMBARKATION, SOME OF THEM HAVING BEEN DEPORTED TO LIBYA.<sup>93</sup>



14/12

**47 people are stranded off Kerkennah** before being rescued ten hours later by the Tunisian coastguard. At least one person died.<sup>96</sup>

16/12

**Four bodies** of people from sub-Saharan Africa are discovered on the coast of Sfax.<sup>98</sup>

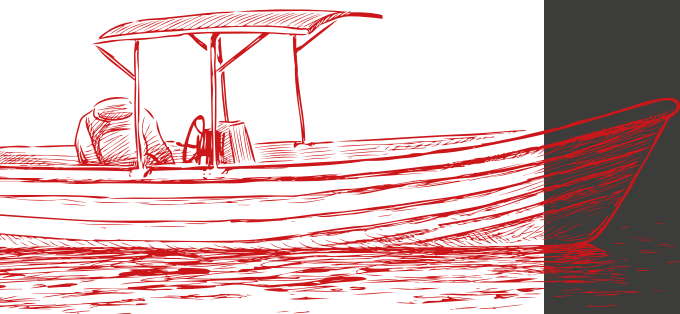
18/12

**Twenty bodies of people from sub-Saharan Africa are recovered** by National Guard maritime units, after a boat capsized on the previous day after setting sail from Chebba.<sup>99</sup>



28/12

A boat with 48 people on board is intercepted by National Guard maritime units. After disembarkation, the people were reportedly **forcibly removed** to Algerian borders and then deported.



18/12

A BOAT CARRYING AROUND A HUNDRED PEOPLE LEAVING TUNISIA IS INTERCEPTED BY THE LIBYAN COASTGUARD. **82 PEOPLE ARE DISEMBARKED IN LIBYA AND 15 ARE REPORTED MISSING.**<sup>101</sup>

30/12

A BOAT WITH 21 PEOPLE ON BOARD CAPSIZES OFF THE TUNISIAN COAST. SEVENTEEN PEOPLE OF TUNISIAN NATIONALITY ARE RESCUED BY THE NATIONAL GUARD AND **TWO BODIES ARE RECOVERED, INCLUDING THAT OF A FIVE-YEAR-OLD CHILD.**<sup>103</sup>

31/12

Shipwreck of a boat with 60 people on board, 37 nautical miles northeast of Djerba in the Tunisian SAR zone.

31/12

TWO BOATS WITH A TOTAL OF **119 PEOPLE WERE IN DISTRESS OFF KERKENNAH.** ONE BOAT WITH 48 PEOPLE WAS SHIPWRECKED, WHILE THE OTHER WAS ADRIFT. THE TUNISIAN COASTGUARD, ALERTED BY HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS, INTERVENED LATE AND RESCUED 83 PEOPLE, RECOVERING **27 BODIES.**<sup>104</sup>



17/02

**7 PEOPLE RESCUED** AT SEA OFF BIZERTE BY THE TUNISIAN COASTGUARD.<sup>106</sup>

20  
25

01/03

32 PEOPLE FROM LIBYA FIND THEMSELVES STRANDED ON THE MIKSAR GAS PLATFORM, UNDER TUNISIAN FLAG WITH NO ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE, AFTER AN ENGINE DAMAGE AND SEVERAL DAYS AT SEA IN DISTRESS. ONE PERSON DROWNED, WHILE **31 OTHERS WERE RESCUED AND DISEMBARKED IN LAMPEDUSA** BY THE CSO SEA-WATCH AURORA FOUR DAYS LATER. TUNISIAN, MALTESE AND ITALIAN COASTGUARDS DID NOT INTERVENE.<sup>107</sup>

01/03

**64 people from Libya are rescued at sea off Mahdia** by Tunisian customs after several hours in distress in the Maltese SAR zone and disembarked at Echabba in Tunisia.<sup>108</sup>

16/03

**612 PEOPLE** from sub-Saharan Africa who had left the coast of Sfax on several boats are intercepted at sea by the Tunisian Coast Guard and disembarked at the port of Sfax,<sup>109</sup> after spending several days at sea, some in distress. **18 bodies were recovered by the security forces, including several children.<sup>110</sup> Several hundred survivors are believed to have been deported to Algeria and Libya.<sup>111</sup>**

19/03

Following the shipwreck off Lampedusa of a boat that had set sail from the Sfax coast with 56 people on board, **the Italian coastguard rescued 10 people in distress. 40 people are still missing and 6 have died.<sup>112</sup>**

31/03

**34 PEOPLE ARE REPORTED MISSING AFTER MAKING A DISTRESS CALL AT SEA OFF THE TUNISIAN COAST. THEY HAD LEFT TUNISIA THE PREVIOUS EVENING IN A METAL BOAT. THEIR FATE IS STILL UNKNOWN, DESPITE SEARCH EFFORTS BY TUNISIAN AUTHORITIES.<sup>113</sup>**

13/04

**67 people from Libya are stranded at sea off Tunisia.** After several calls to the Tunisian coastguard, but without intervention, the people were rescued by the humanitarian vessel Aurora.<sup>114</sup>



**MISSING!**

20/04

Fifteen people, including six minors, are arrested in La Goulette during an attempt to leave for Italy. The minors were placed in care by the social services.<sup>115</sup>



27/04

SHIPWRECK OF A BOAT OFF THE COAST OF Sfax. 29 PEOPLE ARE RESCUED, AND 9 BODIES ARE RECOVERED BY THE NATIONAL GUARD.<sup>116</sup>

29/04

A BOAT FROM LIBYA WITH AROUND FIFTY PEOPLE ON BOARD CAPSIZES OFF TUNISIA. ONLY TWO SURVIVORS WERE RESCUED BY TUNISIAN FISHERMEN AND LANDED IN TUNISIA.<sup>117</sup>

## NOTES

77. Sources include interviews with actors working on maritime and land border management and security, civil society organizations on the ground and with experts working in Tunisia, a review of press articles and academic research papers, viewing and analysis of publicly available videos and photos, as well as referrals by partner organizations and human rights defenders.
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79. «La Guardia Costiera tunisina spera e uccide 52 migranti: 'Mio cugino Musa è uno dei minori annegati quella notte'», 19/11/2024, Fanpage.it
80. «Did the Tunisian coast guard ram a migrant boat and cause 52 people to drown?», 21/11/2024, InfoMigrants
81. «Sea guard units cause migrant woman to give birth in open sea», 08/11/2024 Business News
82. Refugees in Libya on X
83. Humanitarian source
84. Alarm Phone on X
85. Marino Dubois on Facebook
86. «Tunisia: 28 migrants rescued, two dead and one missing when boat sinks», 29/11/2025, Webdo
87. Alarm Phone on X
88. This Italian decree-law n°1/2023189, commonly known as the Piantadosi decree, governs search and rescue operations at sea. A lack of coordination between humanitarian vessels and the maritime authorities recognized as competent for rescue at sea (in this context Tunisia) can be used to justify the detention of humanitarian vessels by the Italian judicial authorities or even prevent potential disembarkations in Italy of people rescued in the Tunisian SAR zone. The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, had called on the Italian government to consider withdrawing or revising decree-law no. 1/2023 in view of the risks of hampering CSOs' search and rescue operations at sea. See Letter to Italy's Minister of the Interior», Council of Europe, January 2023.
89. This Italian decree-law no. 145/2024 governs the entry into Italy of foreign workers, the protection and assistance of victims of caporalization, the management of migratory flows and international protection, as well as related judicial procedures.
90. «'Flows decree' approved in Italian Senate: punitive approach towards distressed people and CSOs», 04/12/2024, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Search and Rescue
91. «Sfax - Lampedusa : Une fillette de 11 ans seule rescapée d'un naufrage», 12/12/2024, Webdo
92. «Tunisia: 9 migrants drowned dead and 6 missing off Mahdia», 12/12/2024, L'Orient-Le Jour
93. Humanitarian source.
94. See footnote 88
95. «MSF ends operation of Geo Barents search and rescue vessel with commitment to return to Central Mediterranean Sea», 13/12/2024, MSF Search and Rescue
96. Alarm Phone on X
97. Jihed Brirmi on X
98. Refugees in Libya on X
99. «Twenty lifeless bodies of sub-Saharan migrants fished out of the sea off Sfax», 18/12/2024, African Manager
100. «Houssemeddine Jebabli: Tunisia is no longer a country of passage to Europe», 18/12/2024, Business News
101. «Report Mediterraneo Centrale - dicembre 2024», 31/12/2024, Mediterraneo Centrale (mediterraneocentrale.altervista.org)
102. Alarm Phone Sahara on Facebook
103. «Drama at sea: Tunisian migrant boat kills two, rescues 17», 12/30/2024, Business News
104. Alarm Phone on X
105. Sergio Scandura on X
106. Humanitarian source.
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108. Alarm Phone on X
109. Migrant Rescue Watch on X
110. «Tunisia: more than 600 sub-Saharan migrants rescued in one night, 18 bodies fished out», 17/03/2025, France 24
111. «Tunisia: hundreds of migrants intercepted at sea disappear from radar», 27/03/2025, InfoMigrants
112. «Six dead, 40 missing as migrant boat capsizes near Lampedusa», 19/03/2025, Al Jazeera
113. Alarm Phone on X
114. Alarm Phone on X
115. «Migration irrégulière : des mineurs interpellés au port de La Goulette», 04/21/2025, Kapitalis
116. «Tunisia: eight migrants dead and 29 rescued after boat sinks», 04/28/2025, Info Migrants
117. Alarm Phone on X

# CHRONOLOGY

## OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

relating to migration and asylum  
in the Mediterranean region

The chronology below presents the main meetings, agreements and political declarations on cooperation and political dialogue concerning border management and migratory flows between Tunisia, the states with which it shares land and sea borders, and its partners, as well as court rulings and political developments affecting people on the move along the central Mediterranean route.

04/11

An Italian court overturns the detention of an asylum seeker who arrived from Egypt and was detained on the basis of the decree **law on the list of safe countries** of



origin.<sup>118</sup> Tunisia is now included in this list, which allows the transfer of Tunisian asylum seekers to closed centers in Italy and Albania.<sup>119</sup> According to the judgment, a list of «safe countries of origin» does not relieve the judge of the obligation to verify the compatibility of such a **«designation with European Union law»** and «there are serious human rights violations in Egypt which affect freedoms within a democratic system».<sup>120</sup>

05/11

The Tunisian Social Affairs Minister holds talks with his Italian counterpart to strengthen legal migration channels for Tunisian citizens to Italy.<sup>121</sup>

20  
24

10/11

The Libyan navy ship Ibn Auf arrives in Tunisia to take part in an international exercise alongside Italy, Turkey, Algeria and Morocco under the aegis of the US Army Africa Command (AFRICOM), with the aim of **strengthening security cooperation in the Mediterranean** in terms of maritime safety, combating irregular immigration and SAR operations.<sup>122</sup>

12/11

For a second time, the Italian courts overturn the detention of people on the move in Albania, and the case is referred to the European Court of Justice.<sup>123</sup> The judges consider it impossible to **«declare entire countries safe when there is evidence of the persecution of minorities»**.<sup>124</sup>



19/11

The Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs meets ambassadors from European Union countries and proposes to **strengthen voluntary return programs** for irregular migrants present in Tunisia and to facilitate mobility between the two shores of the Mediterranean.<sup>125</sup>

25/11

The European Ombudsman concludes that there was «maladministration» by the European Commission in handling a request for access to documents concerning the preparation of a meeting between its President, the Italian and Dutch Prime Ministers and the Tunisian President on June 11, 2023, one month prior to signing an MoU in July 2023. The holding of such a meeting would have required «prior exchanges between the various Commission departments, as well as with the Member States», according to the Ombudsman, who criticizes the absence of any reasonable explanation for the lack of documents concerning this meeting.<sup>126</sup>

04/12

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION RESPONDS TO THE JOINT COMMUNICATION FROM SEVERAL UNITED NATIONS PROCEDURES AND MECHANISMS DATED OCTOBER 1, 2024.<sup>128</sup> ACCORDING TO THE COMMISSION, «RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS REMAINS AT THE HEART OF EU POLICY AND BILATERAL AGREEMENTS WITH TUNISIA».<sup>129</sup>



28/11

The Tunisian Interior Minister meets the Director General of the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), to discuss cooperation in the fight against irregular migration.<sup>127</sup>

10/12

Tunisia's Minister of National Defense receives Libya's Director of Military Intelligence to discuss strengthening and diversifying military cooperation between the two countries, particularly in training and combating terrorism, cross-border crime and irregular migration.<sup>130</sup>

18/12

The Tunisian Interior Minister meets his Italian counterpart in Rome to discuss irregular migration and regional cooperation through the establishment of joint task forces with neighboring countries. Discussions included the adoption of a regional strategy to combat migrant smuggling and to organize voluntary returns in partnership with countries of origin.<sup>132</sup>

18/12

According to the National Guard, «close collaboration with neighboring countries has also played a fundamental role in reducing the number of those infiltrating the country, as coordination with these countries continues to guarantee firm border control and promote regional stability».<sup>131</sup>



20/12

The Tunisian Interior Minister receives the European Union Ambassador to Tunisia. The two parties stressed that managing the phenomenon of irregular migration «cannot be strictly limited to a security-based approach. They insisted on the need for a comprehensive development-focused approach taking into account root causes in order to provide sustainable solutions».<sup>133</sup>

20/12

The **Tunisian Interior Minister welcomes his Algerian** counterpart on the sidelines of the 5th ordinary session of the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee, an opportunity to discuss cooperation in «the fight against irregular migration, border security, the fight against terrorism and organized crime, and the development of border areas».<sup>134</sup>

30/12

**Tenth death of a Tunisian citizen** in an administrative detention center for irregular migrants in Italy in 2024.<sup>135</sup>



01/01

**ITALY'S INTERIOR MINISTER WELCOMES THE FACT THAT «PREVENTIVE MEASURES AGAINST DEPARTURES FROM TUNISIA AND LIBYA TO ITALY ARE WORKING VERY WELL».**<sup>136</sup>

09/01

The Libyan Interior Ministry announces **that it has stepped up patrols along the border with Tunisia**, as part of the fight against smuggling and irregular migration.<sup>137</sup>

16/01

The Italian Foreign Minister receives his Tunisian counterpart in Rome. On the occasion of concluding two agreements on development and cooperation between the two countries, and **the signing of a joint declaration on a funding of Tunisia of 400 million of euros over the period 2025-2027**, the Italian minister declared: «We can disagree with those who consider Tunisia to be a dangerous country for repatriating migrants. We consider Tunisia to be a safe and friendly country. We are contributing to its growth, and we are working to make a significant contribution to its fight against irregular immigration and trafficking».<sup>139</sup>

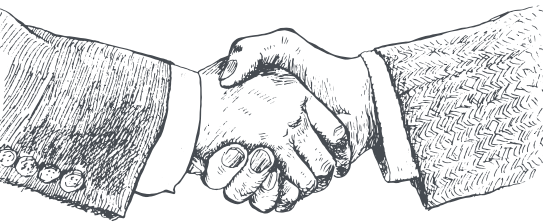
15/01

Decision no. 935 of the Italian Court of Cassation modifies the interpretation of the notion of «safe country of origin» in the context of the right of asylum in Italy, by establishing that, although the designation of a country as «safe» falls within the competence of the government, it does not deprive judges of the possibility of assessing, on a case-by-case basis, whether the personal situation of the asylum seeker justifies an exception to this presumption. **The notion of «safe country of origin» cannot be applied automatically and indiscriminately.** This decision was supported by an order of the Italian Supreme Court in March 2025.<sup>138</sup>



17/01

The President of the Republic of Tunisia receives the President of the Italian Senate and reiterates that **«Tunisia refuses to become a country of settlement for irregular migrants».**<sup>140</sup>



**22/01**

On the occasion of his participation in the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs held talks with the Director General of the IOM. The Minister reiterated Tunisia's firm position of **refusing to be a transit country and/or a place of temporary or permanent residence for irregular migrants.**<sup>143</sup>

**24/01**

**THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DECIDES TO REVIEW ITS FUNDING POLICY TOWARDS TUNISIA AND DRAWS UP «CONCRETE CONDITIONS» FOR DELIVERING ITS PAYMENTS BASED ON RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.**<sup>145</sup>

**27/01**

The Algerian President receives the Tunisian Foreign Minister.<sup>146</sup>

**21/01**

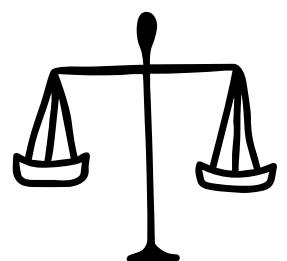
On January 18, **the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Osama Elmasry Njeem**, who allegedly has been in charge of prison facilities in Tripoli, where thousands of people on the move were detained for prolonged periods. He is suspected of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, torture, rape and sexual violence, allegedly committed in Libya from February 2015. He was located and arrested by the Italian authorities on January 19 and taken into custody in Italy. On January 21, 2025, without prior notification or consultation with the Court, Mr. Osama Elmasry Njeem was released and returned to Libya.<sup>141</sup>

**22/01**

**The Tunisian Assembly of People's Representatives organizes a parliamentary study day on the subject of «irregular» migration.** The Secretary of State to the Minister of Foreign Affairs declares that Tunisia would refuse the installation of «landing stations» for people on the move on its territory, and highlights the positive progress made in coordination and cooperation with neighboring countries, contributing in his view to a significant drop in the number of new arrivals in the second half of the previous year.<sup>142</sup>

**24/01**

**THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION REVISES ITS FOREIGN AID POLICY AFFECTING US-FUNDED DEVELOPMENT AID PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THOSE IN TUNISIA UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER 14169, ENTITLED «REASSESSMENT AND REDIRECTION OF U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE» .**<sup>144</sup>  
**A 90-DAY PAUSE ON ALL PROGRAMS IS DECIDED IN ORDER TO CONDUCT A FULL REVIEW.**



30/01

The global humanitarian community is alarmed by the abrupt halt to US aid. The Secretary General of the United Nations expresses his concern at the suspension of aid «essential to the survival and livelihoods of the world's most vulnerable communities».<sup>148</sup> **The United States stops financial support to two IOM shelters in Tunisia.**<sup>149</sup>

10/02

IOM expresses its concern after the discovery of two **mass graves in Libya** located 400 kilometers from Benghazi and in the southeast of the country, **containing respectively 19 and 70 bodies of people on the move**, some of which show traces of gunfire.<sup>152</sup>

17/02

Italy's Prime Minister welcomes the «drastic reduction in landings on the central Mediterranean route and the drop in deaths at sea thanks to the collapse in departures from Tunisia and Libya» and calls for «**a stronger repatriation policy**» for people **on the move to their countries of origin.**<sup>153</sup>

28/01

In response to growing criticism, **the US administration issued additional exemptions on January 28, 2025, allowing the resumption of certain humanitarian programs.**<sup>147</sup> However, these exemptions are limited and have not fully mitigated the disruption caused by the initial suspension.

31/01

The UK Foreign Secretary and Border Security Commander meet Tunisian counterparts and National Guard, who use drones and UK night vision technology to control borders.<sup>150</sup> **The UK announces an investment of £4 million for education programs to limit mixed movements into the European area, as well as £1 million allocated to the IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration program.** «The support I am announcing today, along with UK technologies such as drones and night vision goggles, will save lives, reduce migration levels and help us tackle those responsible for smuggling migrants into the UK,» he added.<sup>151</sup>

25/02

The Tunisian Foreign Minister holds talks with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, stressing «the need to adapt and broaden the scope of cooperation with the European Union», including in the fields of security and mobility.<sup>154</sup>

26/02

The Director General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf (DG MENA of the European Commission), travels to Tunis for a series of **meetings aimed at deepening «relations between the European Union and Tunisia for the period 2025-2027».**<sup>155</sup>



11/03

As part of the Migration and Asylum Pact, which will come into force in 2026, **the European Commission is proposing a «new common return system»**, aimed at speeding up returns to countries of origin and transit, through a revision of the concept of safe countries, and the potential abolition of the connection criterion.<sup>156</sup> Numerous CSOs are expressing their concern.<sup>157</sup>

12/03

The Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs meets the IOM Head of Mission in Tunisia. **The Minister reaffirmed Tunisia's refusal to be a transit country and insisted on Tunisia's commitment to guarantee «a safe and dignified voluntary return, with respect for human rights and in compliance with its international obligations».**<sup>158</sup>

15/03

**Libyan border guards step up patrol operations on the border with Tunisia and Algeria at Ghadames and Nalut.**<sup>161</sup>

18/03

The Tunisian Minister of the Interior affirms that **«the development of border regions, the securing of borders and the fight against smuggling are priorities shared by Tunisia and Algeria»** following his meeting with the Algerian President.<sup>163</sup> The Tunisian Minister of the Interior also met his Algerian counterpart to discuss strengthening border security.

11/03

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Hanna Tetteh, meets the Tunisian Ambassador to Libya to discuss the current situation in Libya. **The Ambassador reaffirms Tunisia's strong commitment to the stability and prosperity of Libya**, underlining the direct impact of the Libyan crisis on neighboring countries.

14/03

Following the xenophobic speech by Libya's Grand Mufti denouncing «demographic manipulation by foreigners»,<sup>159</sup> a hate campaign was launched on social networks against people on the move in Libya. It reached its peak **with the murder of a Sudanese refugee on 13/03 and the multiplication of arbitrary arrests in several cities such as Tripoli, Misrata and Sabratha**, as part of a mass arrest campaign targeting people on the move and migrant smuggling networks, following the announcement by the authorities in the east of the country to step up the fight against irregular migration.<sup>160</sup>

17/03

The Tunisian Prime Minister receives the European Union Ambassador to Tunisia, the Director of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation in Tunisia and the representative of the European Investment Bank to «salute the achievements of the strategic partnership that has linked Tunisia and the European Union for several decades» and **to reaffirm Tunisia's wish to further develop the Tunisian-European partnership on the basis of the MoU signed in July 2023.**<sup>162</sup>

19/03

Italy's Prime Minister declares that she has **«a dual objective: the drastic reduction of landings in the central Mediterranean thanks to the collapse of departures from Libya and Tunisia, and the reduction of irregular entries on other routes».**<sup>164</sup>

24/03

Hanna Tetteh, SRSG and UNSMIL Head of Mission, meets Tunisia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and expresses her gratitude for Tunisia's constant support for UNSMIL. **The Minister reiterated Tunisia's interest in a stable Libya** and pledged continued support for UN efforts to overcome the political impasse.<sup>166</sup>

28/03

The Italian Council of Ministers adopts decree-law no. 37 of March 28, 2025, entitled **«Urgent measures to combat irregular migration»**, providing for the possibility of transferring foreigners already detained in Italian permanent repatriation centers (CPR) and beneficiaries of expulsion orders, to Albania.<sup>168</sup>

01/04

The Tunisian Minister of the Interior attends the **Border Security Summit on organized crime linked to migration in London**.<sup>171</sup>



21/03

In an exchange with the President of the French Republic, the Tunisian President states that **«Tunisia categorically refuses to be a transit country or place of settlement for human trafficking networks»** and wishes «to set up air bridges enabling the victims of trafficking to return voluntarily to their country of origin».<sup>165</sup>

25/03

**THE TUNISIAN PRESIDENT DENOUNCES THE SLOWNESS OF THE PROCESS OF VOLUNTARY RETURN OF PEOPLE ON THE MOVE FROM TUNISIA TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND CALLS ON IOM TO «INTENSIFY EFFORTS»**.<sup>167</sup>

28/03

The Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs declares that **Tunisia remains on the list of safe countries of origin**,<sup>169</sup> thus facilitating the expulsion of Tunisian citizens irregularly present on Italian territory.<sup>170</sup>

02/04

The Italian Joint Committee for Development Cooperation approves **funding of 20 million euros to the IOM, to organize the «voluntary» return of 3,300 people on the move from Tunisia, Algeria and Libya to their countries of origin**. The Italian Minister of the Interior took part in the Committee's work, testifying to «the growing involvement of the Italian authorities in the management of voluntary returns».<sup>172</sup>

10/04

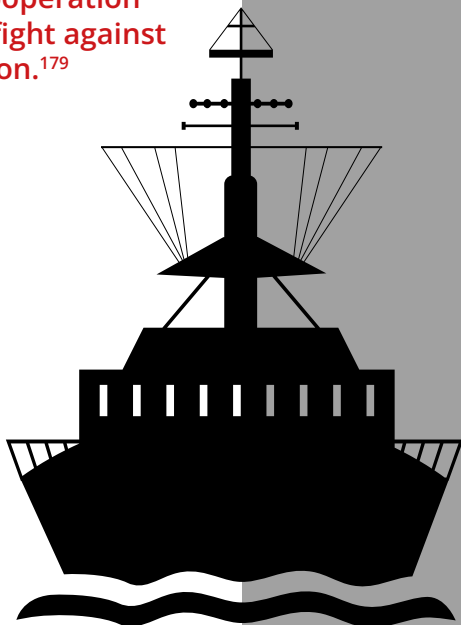
As part of the Khartoum process, the Tunisian Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirms the importance of respecting human rights and Tunisia's international commitments in migration management and **calls for increased support for voluntary return programs.**<sup>174</sup>

16/04

**The European Commission places Tunisia on the proposed list of «safe» countries of origin**<sup>176</sup> common to the EU, allowing the acceleration of asylum processing and return procedures.<sup>177</sup>

22/04

The President of the Republic of Tunisia reaffirms the importance of further strengthening **cooperation with Italy in the fight against irregular migration.**<sup>179</sup>



02/04

The Tripoli-based Internal Security Agency (ISA), affiliated to **the Libyan Presidential Council, announces the «closure of the headquarters» of ten international CSOs supporting people on the move in Libya.** The ISA accuses them of conspiring to «settle irregular migrants of African origin in Libya», a plan it describes as «a hostile act aimed at changing the country's demographic composition and posing a threat to Libyan society», and of promoting «atheism, Christianity, homosexuality and immorality». The ISA affirms that UNHCR was «implicated in these crimes» and announces «dissuasive measures» against its involvement.<sup>173</sup>

11/04

In Naples, the Tunisian Minister of the Interior takes part in the «Steering Committee for the voluntary return of irregular migrants to their countries of origin», alongside the Libyan and Algerian Ministers of the Interior and the Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Praising the efforts made to preserve the achievements of the Tunisian people, their identity and demographic make-up, **he reaffirmed Tunisia's refusal to be a transit country.**<sup>175</sup>

17/04

**TWO AMERICAN MARITIME PATROL BOATS ARE OFFICIALLY COMMISSIONED AT LA GOULETTE NAVAL BASE.**<sup>178</sup>

28/04

**DURING A MEETING BETWEEN THE PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION GROUP WITH EU MEMBER STATES, TWO ITALIAN MEPS AND THE EU'S VICE-AMBASSADOR TO TUNISIA, TUNISIAN MPS DECLARE THEIR REJECTION TO TURN TUNISIA INTO A HOST COUNTRY OR FORCED TRANSIT COUNTRY AND DENOUNCE FORCED EXPULSIONS OF TUNISIAN PEOPLE ON THE MOVE FROM EUROPE.**<sup>180</sup>

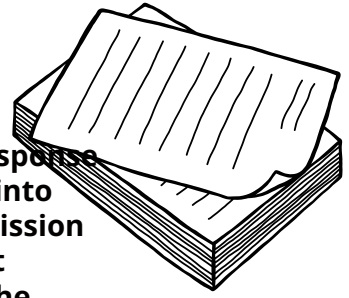
30/04

In April 2025 alone, 1,009 people leave Tunisia for their countries of origin through IOM's assisted voluntary return and reintegration program.<sup>182</sup>

29/04

European Commission response to own-initiative inquiry into how the European Commission intends to ensure respect for human rights under the EU-Tunisia Memorandum of

Understanding:<sup>181</sup> the EU Commission refuses to render the monitoring and evaluation reports on the respect for human rights and the risk management exercise public, despite the Ombudsman's requests.



# NOTES

118. See order of November 4, 2024, annulment of the detention of an Egyptian national by the Court of Catania. Italy, for example, has not yet incorporated an official list of «safe third countries» into its national asylum framework. In 2018, Italy adopted a specific list of safe countries of origin, introduced by the Ministerial Decree of 29/11/2018, known as “Salvini Decree”. The list was modified by the Ministerial Decree of March 9, 2022, which temporarily suspended application of the list to Ukraine until December 31, 2022, and was then extended by the Ministerial Decree of May 7, 2024, which designated twenty-two countries as «safe countries of origin». Under this decree, people from designated countries are presumed not to be subject to persecution, serious harm or violations of their fundamental human rights; this presumption has been challenged, with Italian courts seeking to play a more active role. Legislative Decree 113/2018. The list was amended by the Ministerial Decree of March 9, 2022, which temporarily suspended application of the list to Ukraine until December 31, 2022, and was then extended by the Ministerial Decree of May 7, 2024, which designated twenty-two countries as «safe countries of origin». Under this decree, people from designated countries are presumed not to be subject to persecution, serious harm or violations of their fundamental human rights; this presumption has been challenged, with Italian courts seeking to play a more active role.
119. Italy issues new decree on safe countries to save its agreement with Albania, 12/04/2024, InfoMigrants. On October 18, 2024, a Rome court ruled that Italy's transfer of asylum seekers to Albania was illegal, ordering the return of twelve Egyptian and Bangladeshi nationals to Italy. The Court had stressed that their repatriation to their countries of origin would violate international legal protections, in particular the principle of non-refoulement, as these countries cannot be considered safe for return.
120. «Giudice annulla trattenimento, Egitto non è paese sicuro», 04/11/2024, ANSA
121. «Tunisia-Italy: Towards a strengthening of social protection and regular migration», 05/11/2024, Webmanagercenter
122. «Libyan navy ship 'Ibn Auf' arrives in Tunisia to participate in international training», 10/11/2024, Libya Observer
123. «For the second time, Italian justice invalidates detention of migrants in Albania», 12/11/2024, InfoMigrants
124. Asylum: Italian judges ask European Court to clarify definition of safe country», 30/10/2024, InfoMigrants
125. «Mohamed Ali Nafti meets EU ambassadors», 19/11/2024, Business News
126. 22/01/2024, European Ombudsman
127. «Migration et Sécurité : La Tunisie Renforce sa Coopération avec l'ICMPD», 29/11/2024, Webmanager
128. AL TUN 6/2024
129. https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gld=38874
130. «Tunisie-Libye : vers un renforcement de la coopération militaire», 10/12/2024, Business News
131. «Tunisia reports decrease in migrants via land and sea», 12/18/2024, InfoMigrants
132. «Khaled Nouri meets Italian counterpart in Rome», 12/19/2024, Réalités
133. «Interior Minister Khaled Nouri receives EU ambassador to Tunisia», 20/12/2024, African Challenges
134. «Khaled Nouri and Brahim Merad pledge to strengthen bilateral cooperation at 5th AU session», 20/12/2024, Business News
135. «Suicides of Tunisian migrants in Italian prisons on the rise», 03/01/2025, RFI
136. «Measures to prevent migrants leaving Libya and Tunisia working well, says Rome», 03/01/2025, African Manager
137. «Libya steps up border patrols with Tunisia», 09/01/2025, Business News
138. With Order No. 5992, the Supreme Court clarifies that the designation of a country as «safe» cannot be applied automatically, particularly when there is evidence of systematic human rights violations affecting specific categories of people, underlining the importance of a thorough and individual examination of asylum applications, even when the applicant comes from a country designated as safe.
139. «New agreements between Tunisia and Italy», 17/01/2025, Kapitalis
140. «Saïed : La Tunisie refuse de devenir un pays d'installation des migrants irréguliers», 18/01/2025, Kapitalis
141. «Italy thwarts arrest of alleged war criminal», ECCHR, 31/01/2025
142. «La Tunisie assure en 2024 le retour volontaire de 7 250 migrants irréguliers subsahariens», 22/01/2025, Espace Manager
143. «Migration: IOM ready to cooperate with Tunisia to promote voluntary return of irregular migrants», 22/01/2025, Tunisie Numérique
144. «Implementation of the President's Executive Order on Reassessing and Redirecting U.S. Foreign Assistance», U.S. Department of State, 26/01/2025
145. «Europe overhauls funding to Tunisia after Guardian exposes migrant abuse», 24/01/2025, The Guardian
146. «Algerian President receives Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad», 27/01/2025, AL24 News
147. «US aid freeze: UNHCR takes «precautionary measures», L'Orient le jour, 29/01/2025
148. «United States: UN chief concerned by suspension of US foreign aid», 27/01/2025, UN News
149. Humanitarian source
150. «Video of British Secretary of State sparks outrage in Tunisia», 02/02/2025, Business News
151. «Millions of new funding for programmes to educate would-be migrants», 31/01/2025, The Independent
152. «IOM deeply alarmed by mass graves found in Libya, urges action», 10/02/2025, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
153. «Meloni welcomes collapse in migrant departures from Tunisia and Libya», 02/18/2025, Kapitalis
154. «Tunisie-Union européenne : vers un renforcement du partenariat stratégique», 26/02/2025, Réalités
155. «Stefano Sannino in Tunis: EU announces imminent disbursement of 54 million euros», 01/03/2025, Business News
156. «Commission proposes new common European return system», European Commission, 11/04/2025
157. «New common EU approach to returns: risks and human rights violations», 11/03/2025, La Cimade
158. «Migration en Tunisie : suivi du programme de retour volontaire des migrants irréguliers», 12/03/2025, Business News
159. Speech on Facebook
160. «Libya mobilizes security forces to deal with migrant flows», 14/03/2025, Business News
161. Migrants Rescue Watch on X
162. «Tunisia-EU partnership: government says it wants concrete action», 17/03/2025, Business News
163. «Khaled Nouri discusses securing borders with Abdelmajid Tebboune», 18/03/2025, Business News
164. «Migration | Meloni welcomes «collapse in departures from Tunisia and Libya»», 19/03/2025, Kapitalis
165. «Entretien Saïed-Macron : Palestine, migration et fonds spoliés au menu des discussions», 21/03/2025, Business News
166. «Nafti receives the head of the UN Support Mission in Libya», 24/03/2025, L'Économiste maghrébin
167. «Migration irrégulière : Kaïs Saïed exhorte les organisations internationales à agir davantage», 26/03/2025, Réalités
168. See «Décret législatif 37/2025 : un laboratoire autoritaire de politiques migratoires», 08/04/2025, ASGI
169. This term is not defined in international law - but is used in refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. It enables asylum applications to be processed under an accelerated procedure, on the assumption that an applicant from such a country is presumed not to be in need of international protection. However, international refugee law imposes legal and procedural safeguards to ensure a fair assessment of asylum claims and to guarantee international protection to those who meet refugee criteria. For

more information, see OMCT, The Routes of Torture Vol n°3, p23 - 24, January 2025.

170. See note n°114. See also L'Italie classe la Tunisie 'pays d'origine sûr'», 28/03/2025, Mosaïque FM.
171. «London: Tunisia defends solidarity-based cooperation against irregular migration at border security summit», 03/31/2025, RTC.
172. «Italy finances the return of 3,300 sub-Saharan migrants from Tunisia, Algeria and Libya», 04/04/2025, Business News
173. «Libya announces suspension of 10 international NGOs, accusing them of «hostile» activities», 02/04/2025, RFI
174. «La Tunisie plaide pour une approche humaine et solidaire face à la migration irrégulière au Caire», 10/04/2025, La Presse
175. «Tunisia rejects role of settlement or transit zone», 11/04/2025, Business News
176. A safe country of origin is defined as «a country where, on the basis of the legal situation, the application of the law in a democratic system and the general political circumstances, it can be demonstrated that there is generally and consistently no persecution as defined in art. 9 of Directive 2011/95/EU (recast of the Qualification Directive), nor torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, nor threat by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict» according to Annex 1 of Directive 2013/32/EU (recast of the Asylum Procedures Directive).
177. EUR-Lex - 52025PC0186 - EN - EUR-Lex. See also «La Commission européenne dresse une liste de sept 'pays sûrs' limitant les possibilités d'asile pour leurs ressortissants», 16/04/2025, Le Monde
178. «The Tunisian navy fleet is enriched by two patrol boats», 18/04/2025, Kapitalis
179. «Saïed : non au transit et à l'installation des migrants irréguliers», 22/04/2025, Mosaïque FM
180. Tunisia-EU cooperation: the economy, energy and migration at the heart of discussions», 29/04/2025, Businessnews
181. EU COMM response, 29/04/2025 For the full survey, see Case OI/2/2024/MHZ
182. In April, Tunisia recorded the voluntary departure of over 1,000 migrants», 30/04, RTCI



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) works with 200 member organizations who fight to end torture and ill-treatment, help victims and protect human rights defenders at risk, wherever they are. Together, we form the largest international group active in the fight against torture in over 90 countries. We strive to protect members of underserved communities with great vulnerabilities, including women, children, indigenous peoples, the poor or people on the move.

In Tunisia, the OMCT's direct assistance program, SANAD, provides holistic, tailor-made direct assistance to victims of torture and ill-treatment. We combine field expertise with advocacy to inspire reform, undertake strategic legal action and support institution-building in partnership with Tunisian civil society and government.

The OMCT aims to provide information, gather documentation and share analysis of the human rights situation of all, including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as stateless people. The organization is committed to combating discrimination, racism and xenophobia, and aims to promote and protect the principles of equal rights, equal opportunities and respect for dignity, irrespective of origin, nationality, language, religion, gender or political opinion.

Our warmest thanks go to the many partner organizations, researchers, experts, human rights defenders, journalists and associations assisting people on the move, who shared their views on the human rights situation of children on the move in Tunisia. This report has been greatly enriched by their views and perspectives. Civil society organizations in Tunisia currently play a crucial role in promoting the rights of people on the move.

Special thanks go to the direct victims of violations who shared their suffering and relived their experiences of violence; through this report, the OMCT hopes that their voices can be heard. People, including child victims of human rights violations, are actors for change and in the fight against impunity, and the OMCT salutes their commitment.

All quotes have been anonymized in order to respect the identity of those interviewed. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the OMCT. This report is intended to inform the OMCT's future work and positioning on the subject and will be shared with interested partners and stakeholders.





This report is based on primary and secondary research and programmatic learning. The content of this document is the sole responsibility of the OMCT.

The English version of this report is a translation of the French report « LES ROUTES DE LA TORTURE : Les violations des droits humains subies par les enfants en déplacement en Tunisie. Volume 4 »

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